KANGRA VALLEY PAINTING

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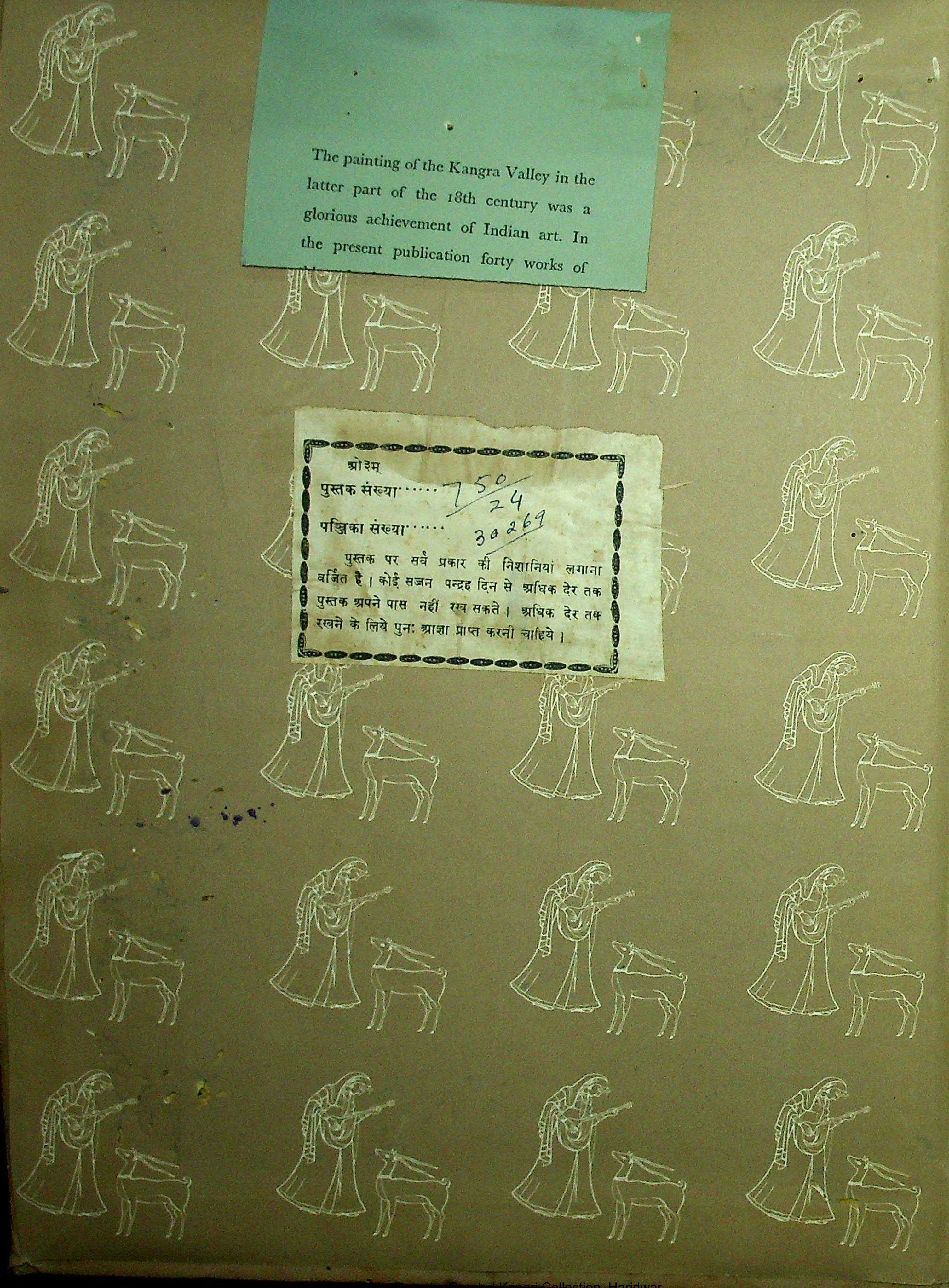

The painting of the Kangra Valley in the latter part of the 18th century was a glorious achievement of Indian art. In the present publication forty works of

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पुस्तक पर सर्व प्रकार की निशानियां लगाना वर्जित है। कोई सज्जन पन्द्रह दिन से अधिक देर तक पुस्तक अपने पास नहीं रख सकते। अधिक देर तक रखने के लिये पुनः आज्ञा प्राप्त करनी चाहिये।

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KANGRA VALLEY PAINTING

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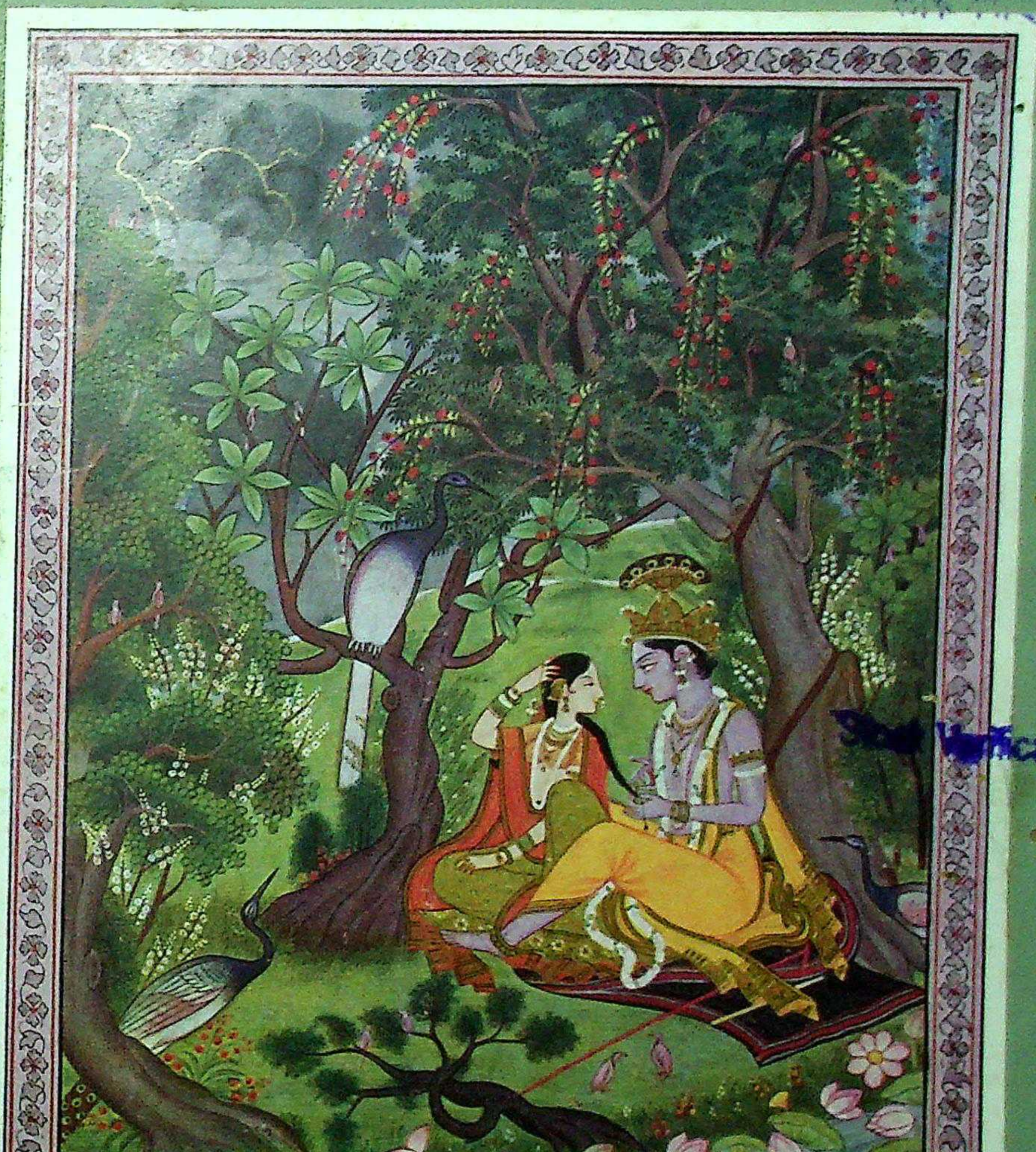

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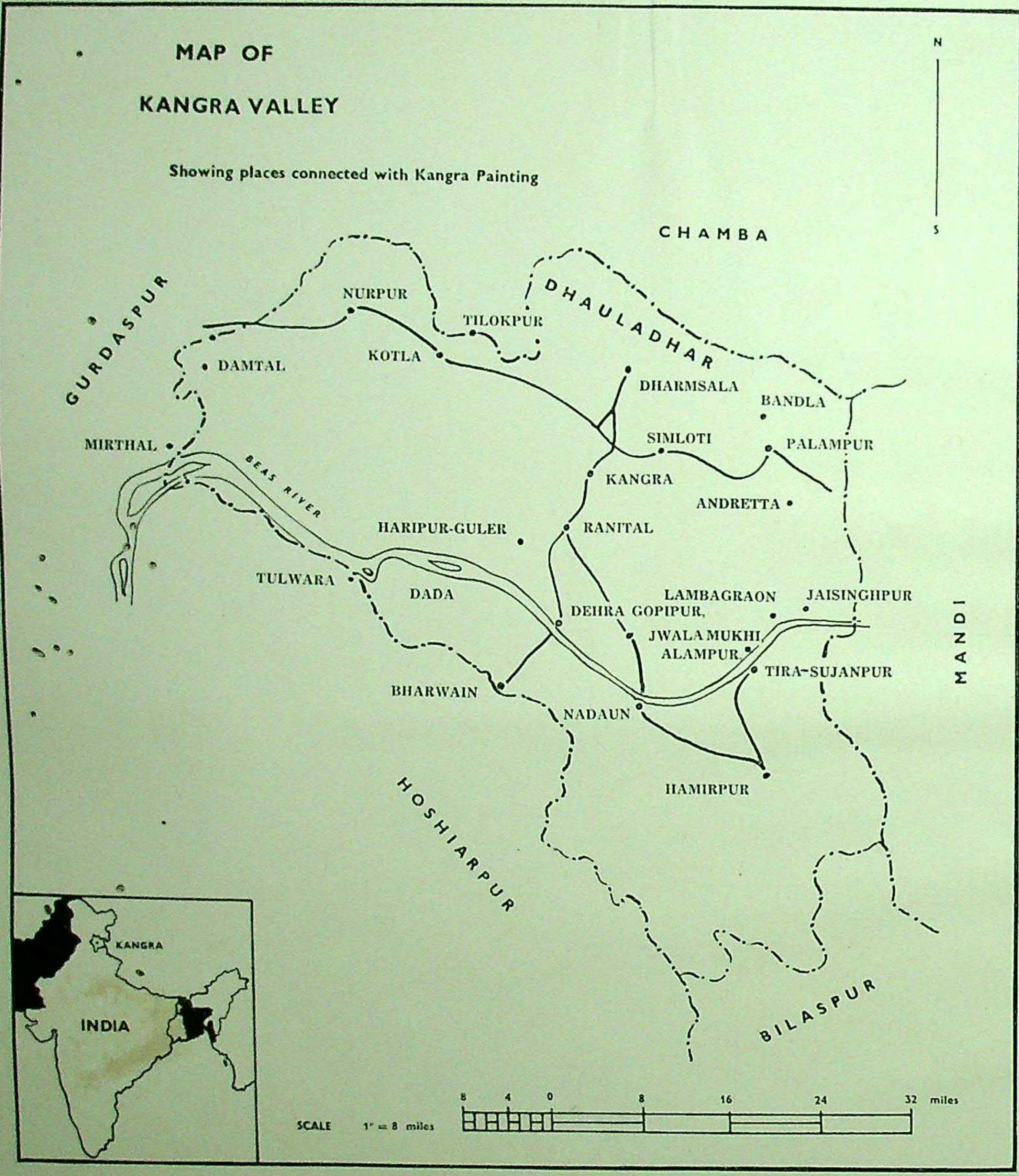

MAP OF KANGRA VALLEY

Showing places connected with Kangra Painting

N
S
CHAMBA
DHAULADHAR
GURDASPUR
NURPUR
TILOKPUR
KOTLA
DAMTAL
DHARMSALA
BANDLA
SIMLOTI
PALAMPUR
MIRTHAL
BEAS RIVER
KANGRA
ANDRETTA
HARIPUR-GULER
RANITAL
TULWARA
DADA
LAMBAGRAON
JAISINGHPUR
DEHRA GOPIPUR,
JWALA MUKHI,
ALAMPUR,
TIRA-SUJANPUR
MANDI
BHARWAIN
NADAUN
HAMIRPUR
HOSHIARPUR
BILASPUR
KANGRA
INDIA
SCALE 1" = 8 miles
8
4
0
8
16
24
32 miles

750, 24
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KANGRA VALLEY PAINTING

Introduction by M. S. Randhawa

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Foreword

M. S. Randhawa is that remarkable phenomenon—a scholar-administrator whose passion for human welfare is only matched by his belief in science and enthusiasm for art. As an I.C.S. officer he has done inspiring work in the Punjab and indeed has never been so happy as when living by its fields and rivers. To see him in a Punjab village is to realise how warm is his human sympathy and how keen his desire for rural betterment. But the man of action is only one of several Randhawas. Besides doing his official work with resolute energy, he has found time to research on botany and has written a vigorous defence of India's flowering trees. Indeed only a man of unusual sensitivity to natural beauty could have produced so challenging an appeal to city planners as his lovely and haunting book, *Beautifying India*.

The present work is a testimony to the most recent of his enthusiasms. Finding his attention drawn in 1952 to the historical problems posed by Kangra Valley paintings, he realised that with the exception of J. C. French no art-historian had so far examined the family collections which might still be surviving in the Valley. These collections could well be of great importance for reconstructing the history of local styles and in a mood of modest adventure he proceeded to make enquiries. The result was that first one and then other collections came to light, and after some time, he was able to confirm the thesis advanced in my *Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills,* that it was Guler, not Kangra, which was the birthplace of Kangra Valley art. Since then, he has made further important contributions to art-history, particularly in the direction of recording artists' genealogies. Throughout his work, however, it is the beauty of the paintings which has been his prime concern. Like his predecessor, A. K. Coomaraswamy, he is drawn to these pictures as enchanting embodiments of human love; and while he would agree that specialists can usefully analyse styles and reconstruct their development, he himself would always prefer to concentrate on the delicate sentiment and romantic poetry in which these works abound. It is certainly a feeling for romantic beauty which fills his present pages and gives them their unusual quality. The pictures, almost all of which are here published for the first time, are drawn from family collections in the Kangra Valley and as such are significant material for students of history. But their importance is very much more, for they introduce us to a romantic cult of innocent womanhood which resulted in one of the greatest styles in Indian art. The text with its clear analysis of salient ideas is a vivid introduction to one of India's greatest achievements.

W. G. Archer

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LONDON

The Cultural Background of

Kangra Art

TO understand any great art, one has to view it as an organism with its own soul, forms of expression, and conventions. Art is the symbol of the culture to which it belongs, acquiring its style of expression in relation to it. Every culture has thus its own style of art, and one must know the culture to understand its phases of development. This is also true of Kangra art.

By the 8th century A.D. Buddhism had well-nigh disappeared from the country of its birth, and had ceased to be an inspiration to the artist. The orthodox art of India, which had found its richest expression during the Gupta period declined rapidly after the 9th century, for the Hindu revival failed to inspire any great art. The " dark age " that followed was singularly sterile. The aesthetic sensibilities of the people, however, found outlets in religious processions, in the celebration of seasonal festivals and in picturesque temple ritual.

This " dark age " came to an end with the Vaishnava Revival of the 11th and 12th centuries. The heralds of the dawn were Rāmānuja and Jayadeva. Rāmānuja (A.D. 1017–A.D. 1137) was born in the village of Sriperumbudur, south-east of Kanchipuram in Madras State. He mastered the Vedas and the sacred books, and wrote commentaries on the Vedānta, the Sūtras, and the *Bhagvad Gīta*. As a pilgrim he travelled widely over India, visiting Jagannath, Kasi, Badrinath in the Himalayas, and other places. His earthly journey came to an end at Sriranganatha in A.D. 1137.

Rāmānuja popularised the worship of Vishnu as the Supreme Being and Creator of all things. According to Vaishnava doctrine, Vishnu pervades all creation, Lakshmī supplying His energy. When sins multiply, He becomes incarnate to rid the earth of its burden. The followers of Rāmānuja venerate Sāligrāma, the ammonite stone, and the *tulasī* plant as symbols of Vishnu and Lakshmī.

Jayadeva was born at Kenduli in the district of Birbhum, West Bengal, and in the course of time became one of the five court poets of Raja Lakshmana Sen, who ruled Bengal about A.D. 1170. In his early years he was a wandering ascetic. In the course of his travels he visited the holy shrine of Jagannāth, and there a strange event changed the course of his life. Padmāvatī, a beautiful Brahmin girl, was to be dedicated as a temple-girl to Lord Jagannāth, but it is said that the image ordered her father to bestow the girl on the saint Jayadeva. Much against his wishes, Jayadeva accepted her, and she attended on him like his shadow. Inspired by her beauty, he composed the immortal poem, *Gītagovinda*, the Song of the Divine Cowherd, in which he describes the love of Krishna and Rādhā. The poem won wide popularity and is still chanted in Bengal and the Karnatak.

The *Gītagovinda* is a symbolical love song based on the poet's spiritual experience. Krishna is the human soul attached to earthly pleasures, and Rādhā, the heroine, is Divine Wisdom. The milkmaids who tempt Krishna from Rādhā are the five senses of smell, sight, touch, taste and hearing, and the return of Krishna to Rādhā, his first love, is regarded as the return of the repentant sinner to God.

Rāmānand, born at Melkote in A.D. 1398, was another great religious teacher. He settled at Banaras, where he attracted a large number of devotees. He popularised the worship of Sītā and Rāma as incarnations of Vishnu and Lakshmī.

Kabīr (A.D. 1398–A.D. 1516) was a disciple of Rāmānand. This great mystic denounced the pretences both of the Brahmin priests and Muslim mullas of Banaras, but had followers both among the Hindus and the Muslims. His writings, which form the corner-stone of Hindi literature, were compiled by a certain Dharam Dās. Dharam Dās and his son, Kamāl, are often shown with Kabīr in Kangra paintings.

The religious revival also stimulated literary activity. The cults of Rāma and Sīta, Krishna and Rādhā were the source of inspiration to many poets who wrote in Sanskrit and Hindi. Jayadeva, Rāmānand and Kabīr are among the most prominent. Mālik Muhammad Jāyasī completed *Padamāvat*, his well-known romance, in A.D. 1540 and Kesavadās, the court poet of Madhukara Shāh, the Raja of Bundelkhand, wrote his *Rasikapriyā* in A.D. 1581.

Tulasī Dās, one of the greatest of Hindi poets, was born in A.D. 1532. His *Rāmāyana* is the most popular book in the villages of Avadh, and it is the basis of the moral and religious life of millions of people.

Bihārīlāl, who lived in Mathura, the home of the Braj-bhāshā dialect, completed his *Sat-Sai*, or 700 couplets on the Krishna legend, in A.D. 1662. These little poems are gems of Hindi literature and have won much fame for their author.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the way was thus being prepared for the emergence of a new form of art born of the rapidly spreading Vaishnava cult in which spiritual experience was symbolised by the relations of the Lover and the Beloved. In this art the worlds of spiritual purity and sensuous delight are interwoven, religion and aesthetics moving hand in hand in quest of Reality.

The *Gītagovinda* and the *Rāmāyana* of Tulasī Dās have been illustrated both in the Basohli and Kangra styles. Padamāvatī whose story is sung by Jāyasī is the subject of a number of paintings. The Eight *nāyikās* and *Bārāmāsā* are favourite themes alike with Kangra painters and the Hindi poets Kesavadās, Matirām, Bansīdhar, Rāmgunī and Gang, and numerous paintings which illustrate their works are extant.

Another important source of inspiration to the Kangra artists is the culture of the Punjab. This source has not been adequately considered by art critics, who usually have little knowledge of the province, its people and culture. In Kangra paintings, particularly those of Nurpur and Guler which were close to the plains, the dress of the women is typically Punjabi; they are usually shown as wearing *suthhan* that resemble breaches, *kamīz,* and *dupattā.* The popular love tales of the Punjab—Hīr-Rānjhā, Mirzā-Sāhibān and Sohnī-Mahinwāl—are often illustrated by the Kangra artists.

Reference may now be made to the great Sikh movement in the plains of the Punjab. Nānak (A.D. 1477–A.D. 1544), the first Sikh Guru, freed the Punjābī mind from superstition and ritualism, and called upon people to break through the barriers of institutionalised priestly religion. Guru Nānak made extensive use of the local language, and Angad, his successor, devised the Punjābī alphabet, based mainly on Tākrī. Arjan (A.D. 1581–A.D. 1606), the fifth Guru, compiled the *Guru Granth,* in which he incorporated Nānak's *Japjī* as well as the religious poetry of Kabīr, Jayadeva, Nāmdev, Dhannā, Pīpā, the Gurus Amar Dās and Rāma Dās and other *bhaktas.*

Gobind Singh (A.D. 1675–A.D. 1708), the tenth Guru, chose Anandpur, a village at the foothills of the Siwaliks for his residence. He was a champion of the downtrodden and constantly fought the Mughal armies and the Hill Chiefs from Anandpur on the Sutlej to Paunta on the Jamuna.

He was not only a soldier, but a poet and a scholar well versed in Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. He translated the legends of Rāma and Krishna to whom he was greatly devoted. His *Chandī-kī-wār,* which deals with the exploits of Durgā, is written in powerful language.

Besides being a poet himself, the Guru kept fifty-two bards permanently in his employ. Their compositions, which must have been considerable, were lost during the wars which were constantly waged against the Mughal Emperor and the Hill Chiefs.

The ten Sikh gurus have been painted by the court artists of Sansār Chand, and there exists a delightful painting of Guru Nānak by a Nurpur artist.

From 1810 the Kangra valley was under the rule of the great Ranjīt Singh, and Sikh influence is apparent in Kangra paintings of this period. From 1830 onwards, we find long flowing beards and splendid turbans instead of beards trimmed in the Muslim style.

The Pathān kings who ruled India from the 12th to the 15th century A.D. were devout followers of Islam, and rigidly obeyed the injunction which forbade the portrayal of human figures. Hindu art as a whole fell on evil days, but it found some patronage at the court of the dismembered Hindu aristocracy. This art became the possession of the people in course of time. Kangra painting is descended from this folk art of Northern India which is commonly known as " Rajput Painting." This term, as used by Coomaraswamy, covers all the old Hindu elements in the paintings of North-Western India east of the Indus; the patrons were invariably Rajput Rajas, though the painters belonged to different castes.

The Mughals were responsible for the revival of art in the sixteenth century. Bābar, Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān were great patrons of painting, though the latter's main interest was architecture. The death knell of art at the Mughal court was sounded by his puritanical son, Aurangzeb, a bigoted Muslim, who dismissed all musicians and painters from his court. Its Hindu painters dispersed to Rajputana and the Hill States of the Western Himalayas where they sought new patrons for their skill.

Thus, Kangra art is the visual expression of a cultural movement with roots in a great spiritual upsurge. Kangra painting is not a sudden development unrelated to the life of Northern India, but is the culmination of a spiritual and literary revival of Hinduism. Coomaraswamy rightly observes that " these works are an immediate expression of the Hindu view of life. Here is that distinct, sharp and wiry bounding line which Blake, most Indian of modern Western minds, regarded as the golden rule of art and life. A line so deliberate, so self-confident, so full of wonder at the beauty of the world, especially the beauty of women, and at the same time so austere, could not be a sudden achievement, nor depend on the brilliance of a single personality. It is the product of a whole civilisation."[1]

EVOLUTION OF KANGRA ART

Rajput painting blossomed into truly great art in the Punjab Himalayas, Tehri-Garhwal and Jammu. The principal centre of this art was the Kangra valley where the artists worked under the patronage of the Hill Rajas of Guler, Tira-Sujanpur and Nurpur. From here it migrated to the neighbouring states of Mandi, Suket, Kulu, Tehri and Garhwal in the East and Chamba in the North. The art of these states was but an off-shoot of the art of Kangra and the most appropriate name for this version of Rajput art is the ' Kangra Valley School of Painting.'

Specimens of early paintings of the " Basohli " style can be found in all the Punjab Hill States. They are simple works, full of strength and primitive vitality. The pattern is rugged and domineering, and the lines and colours are bold and enduring. The hill painter selected themes which he could handle with masculine directness, without apology or prudery. He worked with fearless passion, imparting to his work an energy and power which is in great contrast with the nervous grace of later creations. The artist attained a maximum of expression with the minimum of means. The simplicity, however, often degenerates into mere baldness, and the early creations of Basohli painters lack a sense of mystery—a quality so essential in a great work of art.

The three main centres of Kangra painting are Guler, Nurpur, and Tira-Sujanpur. Guler and Nurpur are near the plains, and their Rajas came into early contact with the

Mughal emperors. Of the Hill States, Guler has the longest tradition in the art of painting. We find portraits of the Rajas Rūp Chand, Mān Singh, Bikram Singh, Rāj Singh and Dalīp Singh. The largest number of paintings belong to the reign of Govardhan Chand (A.D. 1744–A.D. 1773; Plate 1) and it was during this period that the Kangra art of painting was born of the fusion of Rajput and Mughal styles. It reached maturity in the reign of Prakāsh Chand and Bhūp Singh and continued right up to A.D. 1878.

Little has been written about Nurpur, an important centre of Kangra painting. Raja Bas Dev (A.D. 1580–A.D. 1613) came in conflict with the Mughals during the reign of Akbar. Jagat Singh (A.D. 1619–A.D. 1646), however, entered the service of Jahāngīr and must have come in contact with the work of Mughal painters. Rājrūp Singh (A.D. 1646–A.D. 1661) was also in the employ of Aurangzeb. Some paintings ascribed to the reign of Prithvī Singh (A.D. 1735–A.D. 1789) are extant. Most of them belong to the reign of Bīr Singh (A.D. 1789–A.D. 1846), a contemporary of Prakāsh Chand and Sansār Chand.

The most active and prolific school of painting was at Tira-Sujanpur under the patronage of Sansār Chand (A.D. 1775–A.D. 1823; Plate 2). All the earlier Kangra paintings were painted there and at Alampur, and the later ones at Nadaun, all on the banks of the Beas. Anirudh Chand (A.D. 1823–A.D. 1831), whose reign was marked by conflicts with the Sikhs, was also a generous patron of the arts and we find him often depicted with his courtiers. Very little painting, if at all, was done at Kangra proper, which remained under Mughal occupation till 1786 and Sikh occupation from A.D. 1810 to A.D. 1846.

" Sensitive, reticent and tender, it perfectly reflects the self-control and sweet serenity of Indian life, and the definitely theocratic and aristocratic organisation of Indian society. It lends itself to the utterance of serene passion and the expression of unmixed emotions !"[2] This description of Rajput painting by Coomaraswamy is particularly relevant to the art of the lovely valley of Kangra. The romance of the Epics and the Purānas were here given a new life in voluptuous line and colour, the Krishna Līlā with all its exotic symbolism was re-enacted by the painter's brush, the Siva-Pārvatī lore was invested with fresh colour (Plate 40), and the lyrics of Kesavadās were given a new expression.

The art of the Kangra valley acquires deep meaning if viewed in its cultural perspective. The symbolism conveys to us a sense of reality, and the superhuman world of the artist's fantasy no longer appears ludicrous. The style has a unique sense of freedom and is closely connected with the soil. There is no self-consciousness, no studied emotions, no attitudes. It is free from the stresses of exaggerated personality, and deliberate individuation and the painting is nothing but music in colour. The emotions it seeks to portray are registered with astonishing truth. The technique is ' limited,' and we find the painter employing set formulas in the portrayal of features, limbs and landscape. Yet the effect is beautiful, for the forms that evoke it are truly vital, transcending the limitations of mere technique. It is here that lies the greatness of Kangra art.

The flowing and graceful curves of Kangra art form rhymes and assonances. The eye moves with ease and comfort from one point to another enjoying delightful rhythms and harmonies and the restful beauty of the curve.

With a change in the taste of the patrons, and in keeping with the new trends of mysticism, lyricism was seen to enter Kangra painting. " The figures are now more animated, the line more nervous and fluent; the research of physical charm is deliberate, women are willowy and slender, their eyes very long and curved, and the deep-dyed fingers are delicate and tapering."[3] Kangra art was imbued with a subtle charm, and the delicate and refined pictures acquired an almost feminine grace for which they were to become so well known.

The inner vitality and natural charm of the style were soon to fade away. There is an increasing tendency towards mere ornamentation. The energy of the artist is now directed towards superficial embellishment and fineness of detail, and the basic form is neglected. The art falls into decay and dies, but the artist outlives it for a while. He is haunted by memories which he tries to paint, but the living presence that inspired him once is no more. The patronage of the court, too, has disappeared and though he paints, there is neither joy in his work nor life in his creation. There is an endless repetition of cliches, and soon Kangra painting ceases to exist altogether.

The birth of Kangra art in the valley about the middle of the 18th century, and its youth and senescence in the middle of the 19th century is a strange phenomenon in the history of Indian art. Its sudden decay is difficult to explain. The valley is the same with its mountains and sparkling streams of water, but where are those men of genius? As one wanders through the ruins of Haripur, Sujanpur, and Nadaun one cannot help being moved by the dead splendour of the palaces; their culture has disappeared never to return.

To turn to the technique of Kangra painting; its chief features are delicacy of line, brilliance of colour and minuteness of decorative detail. Like the art of Ajanta, Kangra art is essentially an art of line. As Coomaraswamy observes, " Vigorous archaic outline is the basis of its language."[4] This amazing delicacy and fineness of the line was achieved by the use of fine brushes made from the hair of squirrels.

A preliminary sketch in light red colour was made with the brush on brown hand-made Sialkotī paper. This was primed with white and the surface made very smooth. The outlines were then redrawn in brown or black. Colour was now applied, first the background and then the figures. The outline was now redrawn and the picture finished. Very often the colouring was done by assistants after the master had completed the drawing.

The Kangra painters made use of pure colours, like yellow, red and blue, and these have retained their brilliance, even after two hundred years. Many unfinished sketches are to be had in which the names of colours to be employed are indicated on the sketch. Sketches were often preserved as heirlooms, and used for fresh commissions with a few modifications.

Kangra painting knows no perspective, but the wonderful glowing colours and delicate line-work more than compensate for this deficiency. The human figures, particularly of women, were mostly drawn from memory and this explains the similarity of the female faces with gazelle-like eyes, straight noses and rounded chins. Each artist evolved his own formula for the portrayal of faces, and though Kangra art is largely anonymous, it is possible at times to identify the work of individual artists. Almost all the faces are drawn in profile. Perhaps it was easier to do so, but it may be that the beautifully chiselled features of Kangra women are more effectively portrayed in this manner.

Kangra painting is largely anonymous, barring some exceptions. A few pictures from Guler are signed by Gursahāya but nothing is known of the artist himself. Kushanlāl, Hastū and Purkhū are mentioned as artists in the employ of Sansār Chand. Purkhū specialised in delicate paintings in transparent tones and subdued colour. His son, Rāmdayāl, who is said to have inherited much of his father's talent is also mentioned.

In some respects it is fortunate that Kangra art is anonymous, for we can concentrate on the work of the artists themselves without being bothered by irrelevant details of their personality.

The central theme of Kangra painting is love, and its sentiments are expressed in a lyrical style full of rhythm, grace and beauty. As Coomaraswamy states, " What Chinese art achieved for landscape, is here accomplished for human love."[5] The recurring theme of Kangra painting, whether it portrays one of the six seasons or modes of music, Rādhā and Krishna or Siva and Pārvatī, is the love of man for woman and of woman for man. To the Kangra painters the beauty of the female body comes first and all else is secondary. It is her charms that are reflected in the landscape of the Kangra valley. The bamboo and the shadows which the clouds cast are her tresses.

Mr. W. G. Archer has rendered great service to art criticism and appreciation by pointing out sexual symbols in Kangra painting. Whether the symbols were consciously used or were an expression of hidden urges of the subconscious mind is difficult to decide. Rajput society of the late 18th and early 19th century was puritanical in nature. There was considerable repression of normal emotions and it is possible that the aristocracy found a release for its repressed desires in paintings of an erotic character.

These love-pictures display considerable intensity of feeling and are works of real beauty. Life in the foot-hills of the Himalayas was full of danger and insecurity, and death lurked not only on the battle-field but also in the thick forests that covered the area. Women were greatly relieved when their husbands or lovers came home safely, and their meeting was all the more intense for its uncertainty.

We see a deep love of nature in Kangra painting. The landscapes are characteristic of the lower Beas Valley. Low undulating hills crowned with umbrella-like pipal and banyan trees, mango groves, and the farmers' homesteads hidden in clumps of bamboo and plantain, fresh water streams brimming with the glacial waters of the Dhaula Dhar, rivulets meandering through wave-like terraced fields in which love-sick pairs of sarus cranes wander—all these are represented faithfully. This landscape is suffused with love, and the intensity of the artist's perception breaks through the world of appearances to touch the core of reality. As Okakura says, "Fragments of nature in her decorative aspects, clouds black with sleeping thunder, the mighty silence of pine forests, the immovable serenity of the snow, and the ethereal purity of the lotus rising out of darkened waters, the breath of star-like plum flowers, the stains of heroic blood on the robes of maidenhood, the tears that may be shed in his old age by the hero, the mingled terror and pathos of war, and the waning light of some great splendour—such are the moods and symbols into which the artistic consciousness sinks before it touches with revealing hands that mask under which the universal hides. Art thus becomes the moment's repose of religion, or the instant when love steps half unconscious on her pilgrimage in search of the Infinite, lingering in gaze on the accomplished past and dimly seen future—a dream of suggestion, nothing more fixed—but a suggestion of the spirit, nothing less noble."[6]

SEASONS

The Hindu year is divided into six seasons, of two months each. *Vasant,* the Spring, comprises the months of *Phāgun* and *Chaitra.* The Summer scorches the country-side in the months of *Jyeshtha* and *Āsārh.* Then follow the Rains from *Sāwan* to *Bhādon.* When the skies have cleared in the month of *Asūj,* Autumn with its beautiful clouds and golden sunsets begins, and in the month of *Kārtik* the nights sparkle with moonlight. From *Mangsar* to the first half of *Poh* is early Winter, *Hemanta,* when the weather becomes cool and bracing. From the latter half of *Poh* to early *Māgh* is Winter, *Sisir,* season of biting cold, when fields are covered with frost, and snow falls in the Himalayas. According to the prevailing temperature, the year can also be divided into four seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, which can be compared with the four parts of the day—dawn, noon, sunset and night.

The twelve months of the year,[7] *Bārāmāsā,* have delighted Hindu poets, and their descriptions are still read with joy. Kesavadās has left us a delightful account of the seasons in his *Bārāmāsā,* where he describes the life of the people during the different seasons, and their ceremonies and rituals. These have been rendered into colour and line by Kangra painters, as in the set of twelve paintings of the reign of Sansār Chand, which is now in the possession of Raja Dhruv Dev Chand of Lambagraon. In each, a couple in the form of Rādhā and Krishna is shown in the foreground, their dresses varying with the seasons. The landscape in the background illustrates the vegetation and the activities of men and animals in that particular season. Three of these paintings illustrating Spring, Summer, and the Rains are reproduced here.

Vasant, the Indian Spring, is heralded by cooing doves and the yellow flowers of *sarson* which wave like a sea of gold in the first week of February. The *sīsam* trees are covered with pale green silk-like leaves. Men and women wear saffron clothes which harmonise with nature. The earth is ablaze with the orange and scarlet flowers of the *asoka* and the *dhāk* trees. The pink, white and purple mauve blossoms of the *kachnār,* the pale yellow blossoms of the mango, the snow white *kainth* and a profusion of other multicoloured flowers lend charm to the landscape.

There is warmth in the air and lovers feel drowsy with amorous languor. The famous festival of Holī is celebrated during *Phāgun,* the lovers' month. Men and women sing the joyous songs of Spring, and throw orange coloured water at one another. There is revelry and merry-making and lovers smear each other's faces with *gulāl,* a red vegetable dye mixed with powdered mica.

Born of the warm breath of spring, Holī is an exuberant festival, a blend of glowing sensuousness and religious mysticism. With his left arm round the shoulders of the young lady, the lover looks at her fondly. The lady is clad in thin transparent muslin, and the palms of her hands are dyed red with henna. Near the terrace is a tree laden with flowers, and in the background a crowd of revellers are playing Holī. A man leads the procession with a drum. Men are throwing *gulāl* at one another, while women sprinkle coloured water on the men from windows. The month of *Phāgun* is represented thus in a *Bārāmāsā* painting (Plate 3).[8]

Spring slowly ripens into summer. The trees sprout new leaves and the *gulmohurs* flush a vivid scarlet. The fierce rays of the sun beat mercilessly down on the brown earth, and the hot winds fill the atmosphere with stifling dust. Every living creature seeks shelter in the shade. Even the tigers are weary and lie languidly in their caves. The whole firmament is aglow with the dazzling radiation of the sun. Elephants oppressed by the heat rend the air with their trumpeting, snakes leave their holes, and wayfarers seek the hospitable shade of mango groves, and quench their thirst from the *pyāu.* The lovely lady draped in blue stands on the terrace, her palms dyed red with henna. She talks to her lover who wears a muslin *chogā.* The golden yellow racemes of the *amaltās* tree contrast delightfully with her blue drapery (Plate 4).

After the parching heat of *Jyeshtha* and *Āsārh,* dark clouds appear in the sky. The rains are welcomed with joy by all. The earth is covered with a carpet of green grass. Lovers' hearts are filled with bliss. Elephants enjoy the cool showers while leopards seek shelter in the caves. A raging wind blows while the clouds pour rain and lightning flashes through the sky. The lovers enjoy the scene from a terrace. The young lady points to a deer pursued by a tiger (Plate 5).

Sāwan is the month of lovers, amorous and passionate. In the cool and fragrant breeze, lovers parted from each other feel the pangs of separation. Those who are together watch the dark rolling clouds and the flashes of lightning with happiness. Cleaving the dark clouds with their golden legs are flights of white cranes, who provide a thrill to the lovers drunk with the joy of the rainy season.

THE EIGHT HEROINES

(*Ashtanāyikā*)

The Hindi poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were keen observers of human nature. Their classification of women according to age, experience, physical and mental traits, situation, moods and sentiments provided themes for the Kangra painters. The most important of these was Kesavadās, a Brahmin from Orchha, in Bundelkhand. He was the court poet of Indrajit Shāh of Orchha and he wrote his famous love poem *Rasikapriyā* in A.D. 1591. A number of *nāyikā* paintings from Kangra are inscribed with texts from the *Rasikapriyā.*

The *Rasikapriyā* is written in vivid style. The language is musical and the expression frank and forthright. The sentiment of love is at the same time expressive of a passionate, sincere religion. "The soul's devotion to the deity is pictured by Rādhā's self-abandonment to her beloved Krishna and all the hot blood of oriental passion is encouraged to pour forth one mighty flood of praise and prayer to the Infinite Creator, who waits with loving outstretched arms to receive the worshipper into his bosom, and to convey him safely to eternal rest across the seemingly shoreless Ocean of Existence."[9]

These Hindi love poems are noted for their bright and compact style. Neat little pictures are painted in a few words particularly in the *dohās* or couplets. These lend themselves particularly to painting and in fact the Kangra miniatures are really poems dressed in line and colour.

A three-fold classification distinguishes *nāyikās* as one's own (*svakīyā*), another's (*parakīyā*) and anybody's (*sāmānyā*).

Ashtanāyikā

The *svakīyā* heroines are classified into eight broad types (hence the name *ashtanāyikā,* eight heroines). It may be mentioned that the terms 'lover' and 'husband' are almost synonymous in India, for unlike the West, free love among the sexes is, to all intents and purposes, unknown. The eight Nayikas are as follows :—

Svādhīnapatikā
Utkā, or *Utkanthitā*
Vasakasayyā, or *Vasakasajjā*
Abhisandhitā
Khanditā
Prositapatikā or *Prosita-Preyasī*
Vipralabdhā
Abhisārikā

Svādhīnapatikā is the heroine to whose virtues her Lord is devoted and to whom he is bound in love and is perpetually a companion.

The heroine is represented in Kangra painting as Radha seated on a *chaukī,* while Krishna washes or presses her feet and legs. He is also shown applying lac dye to her feet. She looks with pride and self-confidence at the completely subdued and docile Krishna.

In literature the heroine is described thus by the *sakhī:* "O Rādhā, Krishna is the lifegiver of Vraja and a darling of Brahmā; and the goddesses, demon-women, Sūryā and Lakshmī, are never tired of singing his praises. And you, only a mean little shepherdess, have your feet cleaned by him and he, the Lord of the universe, is constantly clinging to you like your shadow. He takes care of your pettiest affairs and resides in you as the image dwells in the mirror, no matter if the angels sound trumpets in his praise. He runs after the chariot of your desires like the water of the Ganges of yore which followed in a winding trail the chariot of Bhagīrath. Your words are like the Scriptures to him. It is, therefore, absurd to try to dissuade him from doing all this even for the sake of saving him from calumny."

Utkā is the anxious heroine whose lover has failed to keep his appointment at the promised hour.

She is represented as standing on a bed of leaves covered with jasmine flowers under a tree beside a stream. She has adorned the trunk of the tree with garlands of jasmine. A pair of love-birds are perched on the tree. The heavy dark clouds are lit up by a flash of lightning. The heroine who is like the dryad of some enchanted forest eagerly awaits the arrival of her lover (Plate 7). At times deer are shown near the trysting place, sniffing at the wind or drinking water from a lotus lake.

The *utkā* soliloquises thus: "Is he detained at home on business or by company, or is it an auspicious day of fasting? Is it a quarrel, or the dawning of divine wisdom which keeps him away from me? Is he in pain, or is it some treachery that keeps him from meeting me, or the impeding waters, or the terrifying darkness of the night? Or is he testing my fidelity? O my poor heart, you will never know the cause of this delay."

The *vāsakasayyā* being desirous of union with her Lord waits for him on the doorstep. Her body, white like the sandal tree, glows like a lamp, and her garments, blue as the clove-vine creepers, flutter round her fair soft limbs. She is startled at the slightest sound of birds or animals. She speaks softly and relates her heart's desires to her confidante as she casts the spell of her enchantment.

The heroine is represented in Kangra painting as a woman standing at her bedroom door happy and anxious for her lover's expected arrival. Brisk preparations for his reception are being made in the household; a woman sweeps the courtyard, another empties stale water from a flask, and the bedroom is being tidied up. The lover sits in a ferry-boat on the other side of the river, close to a pair of sarus cranes.

Abhisandhitā is the heroine who disregards her lover's devotion, but is full of remorse in his absence, for she feels the pangs of separation all the more. In the painting reproduced (Plate 8) the lovers are shown as having quarrelled. Krishna clad in yellow with a peacock's feather in his turban is about to leave. There is intense sorrow and gloom on Rādhā's face. Krishna has tried to assuage her anger, but she will not relent and repulses him in anger. But as Krishna turns his back and is about to depart, she regrets her harsh words.

" How foolish of me," she thinks, " not to have responded when he spoke to me repeatedly! I was adamant and would not yield when he fell at my feet, but now my limbs seem to melt like butter. Woe to me! I am helpless and beyond all cure! When my dearest Lord tried to propitiate me, I would not listen, unfortunately I didn't relent; and my soul is filled with the bitterest mortification and repentance." Rādhā's fingers are gracefully drawn and her black tresses are visible beneath the transparent *dupattā.* The curves of her delicate body and her mood of mixed resentment and sorrow are well portrayed.

Khanditā is the heroine whose lover fails to keep his appointment at night, but comes the next morning after spending the night with another girl. The heroine upbraids her lover.

" What the ears have never heard, eyes have actually seen. Such are the praises sung in your honour all over the place! Unmindful of your family honour you have been feasting yourself like a crow on discarded crumbs; and your vile appetite grows rapacious. Unable to discriminate between good and evil you fall upon the feet of those who denounce you. Tell me, O Ghanasyāma, after seducing whose honour have you come here this morning to my house to hide like an owl your ominous face?"

In the pictures of the *khanditā nāyikā,* an angry and offended heroine is shown upbraiding the lover who has entered her courtyard, abashed and with a guilty face.

Prositapatikā is the heroine whose husband is away for some time on business.

In a painting from Guler, the heroine on hearing the rumble of the clouds goes up to the balcony. She wears a spotted *dupattā,* and looks eagerly at the flying sarus cranes, while a peacock, symbol of the absent lover, raises his head in exultation. It is about to rain, and the lady prays to the passing clouds for the safe return of her lover (Plate 9). The painting could well be an illustration of the following verse:

> When she hears the thundering of the autumn clouds, the moon-face bids her *sakhīs* not to go upon the roof,
> And seeing that the ground was full of drops of rain, the friendly *nāyikās* gave her unto the (pleasant) crying of the peacocks and the *chātakas:*
> The fawn-eyed lady wears a spotted veil that's bright of hue, and *sirīs* flowers are deftly woven in her tresses,
> With waning pride she stands and looks, and pray the lightning and the leaden clouds. "Give me news of my dear Dark One."[10]

Vipralabdhā is the disappointed heroine who has waited in vain for her lover throughout the night. She is shown standing under a tree on the edge of a bed of leaves, tearing off her ornaments in disgust and flinging them on the ground. The empty space in the background symbolises her loneliness, frustration and deep distress. Her feelings are described thus:

> Flowers are like arrows, fragrance becomes ill-odour, and pleasant bowers like fiery furnaces,
> Gardens are like the wild woods, Ah Kesava! the moon-rays burn her body as though with fever,
> Love like a tiger holds her heart, no watch of the night brings any gladness,
> Songs have the sound of abuse, *pān* has the taste of poison, and every jewel burns her like a firebrand.[11]

Abhisārikā is the heroine who goes out to meet her lover. She is classified under various heads by different poets, and is a favourite theme with Kangra artists. The *krishnābhisārikā* and *suklābhisārikā* are the heroines who fare forth to meet their lovers during dark and bright nights respectively are shown in Plates 10 and 11.

In a charming picture of *krishnābhisārikā* the lady wearing a blue veil goes out to seek her lover. It is a dark night with black clouds and there are intermittent flashes of lightning. The forest is infested with snakes and haunted by *churails.* Undeterred by the terrors of the jungle, the storm, the snakes, the goblins and the darkness, the heroine, filled with passion for her lover, goes to seek him (Plate 10).

According to the *Kāmasūtra,* desire in the heart of women waxes and wanes with the moon. When the moon is full, the woman's desires are particularly ardent. In this picture, she is shown going forth in search of her lover (Plate 11). The full moon in the sky fills the atmosphere with its silvery beams, and its pale cool light is painted with remarkable skill. The drapery of the woman and her delicate features are suffused with the mellow light.

Guru Gobind Singh, in his *Dasam Granth,* describes Rādhā, the *suklābhisārika,* thus: " Rādhikā went out in the light of the white soft moon, wearing a white robe to meet her Lord. It was white everywhere and hidden in it, she appeared like the light itself in search of Him."

LOVE IN SEPARATION

(*Viraha*)

According to the situation of lovers, love is of two kinds; love in separation (*viraha*), and love in union (*samyoga*). *Viraha* is of three varieties; *pūrva rāga,* the beginning of love, *māna,* the separation of lovers out of false pride and obstinacy, and *pravāsa,* the separation of lovers caused by the departure of the lover for foreign lands.

In Kangra painting love awakens at first sight. Thus, in the illustrations to the tale of Mirzā-Sāhibān the lovers fall in love at first sight. The meeting at the village well is another occasion for falling in love. The tired and thirsty prince who is out on shikār comes to the village well and asks the pretty girl for a draught of water. As he drinks the water with cupped hands he lifts his eyes for a moment to look at the face of the girl. Their eyes meet and the inevitable happens.

A closely related theme is that of the lover looking at his beloved who is unaware of his presence. Thus, Krishna is shown watching Rādhā who is looking in the kitchen or is having her hair combed by a maid in the courtyard of her home. A delightful painting from Guler (Plate 12) shows Rādhā bathing, while Krishna watches from a balcony overlooking the bathing platform. Rādhā is on a *chaukī;* one of her attendants curtains her off with a green sheet, while another with her out-stretched veil. Her flowing jet black hair is in charming contrast with the golden complexion of her body. Vidyāpati describes her charms thus:

> Ah, Mādhava! I saw the fair one freely;
> I suddenly beheld her as she bathed.
> Her jet black hair poured over her breast,
> As though a shaggy yak concealed a golden Mahesa.[12]

Māna

Māna means coldness, obstinacy and pride; *māninī nāyikā* is the ' unwilling ' lady who pays no attention to her lover, in spite of his prayers, entreaties, and messages of love.

She is shown in a Kangra painting (Plate 13) as a girl who has escaped from her husband's arms, leaving him alone. Disappointed, he watches her from a balcony, while dark monsoon clouds sail in the sky. A pair of sarus cranes soar heavenward. The husband has sent a duenna to pacify the young lady who leans against a pillow with her back towards him. She is cajoling her with promises but the young lady does not relent.

The third phase of *viraha* called *pravāsa* has four stages according to the intensity of desire, or anxiety felt by the separated lady: longing (*abhilāshā*) for union, anxiety (*chintā*) which continues to rack the body till a meeting is effected; and sickness (*vyādhi*) when the fever of love increases and the body wastes away.

Paintings of lonely ladies, gazing at clouds and birds like the *chakora, hansa* or peacock and fanning themselves, are usually of women parted from their lovers. They have a special appeal to men accustomed to travel, for they remind them of their wives when they are away from home.

In the picture reproduced (Plate 14) the heroine looks at the crows, one of which is cawing from the cornice. She asks it to fly away and bring news of her lover. If her lover returns home safely, she promises to have his beak gilded in reward for his services.

> If my desire be fulfilled, on hearing the news you bring I shall make your beak to be plated with silver,
> I shall give you to eat a ladle of excellent *churi* mixed with sugar and *ghī*,
> Let me behold Tulā Rām while yet I live, but bring him not only for a single hour!
> If you have seen my Lord a-coming home, then fly away from the cornice, thou crow ![13]

The black buck, the peacock, the *hansa,* the *chakora,* and the snake are the symbols of the lover, and he is often represented by these in Kangra paintings. Love-sick heroines who seek relief from the pangs of separation are shown playing with these birds and animals. There is a charming painting of a *virahinī nāyikā* (Plate 15), in which a lady playing a small *tambura* under a willow tree is shown with a black buck. The sad music is reflected in her flowing drapery, the graceful curves of her body, and in the weeping branches of the willow tree. The picture is a fine example of Kangra art as practised at Guler, and is an excellent illustration of the longings of love (*abhilāshā*). This popular Kangra motif is also to be seen in the murals which decorate the walls of the *āsram* at Damthal.

That the painting is a representation of *virahinī nāyikā* is proved by a similar Guler painting on the back of which is an inscription which reads: " The young lady wearing a garland of flowers, admiring the blossoms, and playing the *tār* is longing to meet her lover."

In another painting from Guler (not reproduced here), the feeling of anxiety (*chintā*) in a woman separated from her husband is portrayed most vividly. A young lady with deep anxiety on her face is shown walking along the edge of a lotus-filled tank. The mango trees are laden with luscious fruit. It is a warm day, and the lady is fanning herself. Scattered among the cup-like leaves of the lotus plants are pale pink lotus buds of unearthly beauty. The agitation in the woman's heart is echoed by the leaves of the lotus which are all in utter confusion and disorder.

Love-sick ladies whose husbands are away are often shown in men's clothes, for this reminds them (*simran*) of the joys of love in union. This state is shown in a very fine painting from Guler (Plate 16). The Raja is away on his travels and the Rani dresses herself for amusement in her husband's clothes which include a turban decorated with a peacock's feather. One of her companions shows her the mirror while another holds a *thālī* containing vermilion. The Rani examines the vermilion mark which has been painted on her forehead by her companion. The empty bed in a pavilion suggests the absent lover. It is a warm summer night and the moonlight is depicted with great charm. Two maidservants enjoy the breeze from a fan. Such features as the pavilion, the minaret, the column-like cypresses alternating with mango-trees with rounded crowns, the fountains in the foreground, and the nose-rings with two pearls worn by the women, all taken together suggest that it is the work of Gursahāya, a Guler artist.

Love-sick women also try to forget their sorrow by playing games. A painting of extraordinary delicacy (Plate 17) shows two ladies playing chess. There is an expression of intense concentration on the players' faces. A duenna and two servant girls are looking on, and in the background is a grove of green-leaved trees. The transparent drapery, the soft colours, and the confident, graceful and rhythmical lines mark it out as a masterpiece.

In the palaces of the Rajput chiefs of Kangra there were two types of gardens, the daylight gardens and the moonlit gardens. The centre of the former was occupied by a bathing tank with a fountain and at its side was a marble water pavilion. In the hot summer months of May and June, the daylight garden was the favourite resort of the Ranis and their maids, its cool waters providing relief from the burning heat of the day. Such a garden is shown in a Guler picture (Plate 18). The lady is sitting on the edge of the tank and her right foot is being washed by a maidservant. Her jet black tresses fall over her shoulders and accentuate the soft curves of her body. The mood of the painting suggests the longing of love.

In a similar scene (Plate 19), probably by the same artist, a semi-draped Rani is shown seated on a *chaukī*. She cools her left hand in the spraying fountain. In the foreground are two women; one of them is playing happily on the *tānapūrā,* and the other on a *dholak.* A maid prepares the bed in the pavilion and covers it with flowers. In the background are the cypresses which are a marked characteristic of Guler paintings. The spout of the ewer, like the columns of cypress, suggests erotic feelings and the picture pulsates with the passionate longings of a woman awaiting her lover.

Plate 20 depicts the love-lorn *virahinī* during the rainy month of *sāwan,* when married women eagerly await the return of their husbands. The dark clouds in the sky are lit up by flashes of lightning; and the snow-white sarus cranes contrast vividly with their sombre colour. The heroine watches the flight of the birds from a pavilion. In the foreground is a mountain lake with rushes growing on its banks among which slate blue sarus cranes, intensely devoted to each other, move about in pairs. A flock of cattle is grazing peacefully on a meadow close to the hamlet. The maidservants play on the *tānapūrā* and the *dholak.* The intense heat that precedes a thunder shower is skilfully suggested. A maidservant pours some cold drink into a cup while another makes some sandal paste. Another maidservant fans the *nāyikā* but her body, burning with the fever of love, knows no coolness. The modesty and love of a young Indian woman are gracefully portrayed in this picture.

The last stage of *viraha, vyādhi,* is illustrated in a painting from Tira-Sujanpur (Plate 21). Unable to bear the pangs of separation, the lady has fainted. A maidservant applies sandalwood on her bosom, while another fans her. In the adjoining balconies pairs of anxious women express concern over the lady's condition. In the background is a pastoral scene, where villagers warm their limbs in front of log-fires in the severe winter. The cold weather outside is in contrast with the hot fever of love that racks the body of the lady separated from her lover.

LOVE IN UNION

(*Samyoga*)

The 'external indications of emotion' in a hero and a heroine occasioned by love in union are called *hāva* and are of twelve kinds.[14] *Līlā-hāva* is the enjoyment of amorous caresses by the lovers. In *vilāsa-hāva,* 'flutter of delight,' the eyes of the heroine shine with happiness. When the hero's charm is displayed through his smart dress and decorations, it is called *lalita-hāva,* or 'voluptuous gracefulness.' The wearing of simple clothes and a few ornaments by a woman confident of her personal charm is considered to be an indication of love, and is called *vicchitti-hāva.* Flustered at the arrival of her lover, the heroine wears her ornaments at the wrong places and this is called *vibhrama-hāva.* Sometimes the emotions of anger, joy, desire and fear are strangely mixed and the resulting 'hysterical delight' is called *kilakincita-hāva.* Sometimes the heroine yawns or stretches on hearing her loved one talked of in praise. These mute involuntary expressions of affection are called *mottāyita-hāva.* When the heroine pretends to be indifferent to the arrival of her lover, making a show of anger and uttering unpleasant words though her heart is full of love, the display of emotion is called *bibboka-hāva.* When the heroine under the influence of love forgets her modesty, her wantonness is called *helā-hāva.* When a hero communicates his feelings to the heroine by signs, it is called *bodhā-hāva,* e.g. a lover presents a withered lotus to the lady to indicate the condition of his heart.

A stimulus which awakens the erotic flavour is called an excitant (*vibhāva*). Excitants are of two kinds, essential (*ālambana*) or enhancing (*uddīpana*). The flavour (*rasa*) is absolutely dependent on an essential excitant which is material and necessary to it. The enhancing excitants are those which merely enhance the flavour; moonlight, clouds, flowers, perfume, red and yellow colours, music, the *koel's* song, and the humming of bees thus enhance the *rasa*. The gesture or movement that gives rise to a flavour is called an ensuant (*anubhāva*); of these the swaying of the body, the motion of the side-brows, and side-glances are important.

Moonlight is one of the enhancing excitants and is a favourite of the poets as well as the Kangra painters. It holds a very special place in the life of India as it does in Japan.

In these two countries special festivals are celebrated in honour of the moon, and its beauty is an integral part of garden design. Kobori-Enshiu, the great Japanese designer of gardens, wanted the ideal garden to be like " the sweet solitude of a landscape coloured by moonlight, with half-gloom between the trees."

In India, the moonlit garden has dark trees with fragrant white flowers. During the summer months, the air is heavy with their perfume, and with the silver moonlight falling on the beautiful white flowers the garden becomes a feast for the senses.

Such a moonlit garden is shown in a Guler picture (Plate 22). The white and purple *kachnār* trees shine in the light of the brilliant half-moon against a background of banana trees and erect cypresses that surround the tank in the palace courtyard. The Raja sitting on the wall of the garden lifts the Rani, who steps over her maid as though she were a foot-stool. In the balcony another Rani lies semi-nude in bed, while in the second storey the maidservants prepare the Raja's bed.

In a painting from the early nineteenth century by Gursahāya (Plate 23), we have an exquisite representation of love in union. A Raja and Rani rest against a cushion in a garden-pavilion. They look fondly at each other, while a fountain plays in the foreground. A number of maidservants are in attendance; one of them holds a *gangā-sāgar* and a cup of water, and another a garland and a *pāndān*. A girl plays the *vīnā*. Behind the pavilion is a garden of sensuous delights, and the plantain trees beside the pavilion lend a sylvan touch to the love scene.

Some remarkable paintings from Nurpur, possibly painted during the reign of Raja Bīr Singh, deal with the theme of love in union. The artist has made liberal use of primary colours like red, yellow and blue, and his works throb with life and passion. The men in these paintings are vigorous and masculine, while the women are creatures of passion who enjoy male company unreservedly. The female faces are rose, pink and golden and their jasmine-white limbs and delicate ornaments contrast with the scarlet cushions.

A painting showing the elopement of a princess with a mahout is of outstanding beauty (Plate 24). The elephant-driver is seated on the animal's neck, while the princess is being lowered into his arms by a maid-servant. The mahout is delighted, while the princess has a mixed expression of anxiety and joy on her face. The mahout's companion stands by, and the elephant himself appears to regard the adventure with a suspicious eye.

A young prince is shown in the company of his Rani and concubines in another remarkable picture from Nurpur (Plate 25). The women are all semi-draped in transparent muslin. The prince offers a cup of wine to his favourite, while another woman holds a flask. A *hukkā* with coiled stem stands in a corner while the sword and clothes of the happy warrior lie in another. The bright red and yellow colours, contrasting with the fair complexion of the women and the white marble screen, succeed in evoking the atmosphere of a sensuous and passionate scene.

In a number of Kangra paintings from Tira-Sujanpur, lovers are shown admiring flights of sarus cranes on a lotus lake. In Plate 26, Rāma and Sīta are shown seated on a golden throne watching these white birds fly in a sky darkened by monsoon clouds that are rent by silver streaks of lightning. Hanumān, the monkey general of Rāma, stands in front of the divine couple with folded hands, while his monkey soldiers with red, dark faces stand by the side. The brothers of Rāma—Lakshmana, Satrughna and Bharat—are standing behind, waving *chaurīs*. Rāma's face bears an expression of delight as he points to the flying cranes and Sīta shares the joy of her husband. It is altogether a perfect picture of domestic bliss and felicity. In the foreground is a lake with pink lotus buds and blossoms. In a corner can be seen a pair of sarus cranes making love to each other.

Krishna-Līlā has provided numerous themes to Kangra artists to depict love in union. In a charming Guler painting, Krishna is shown standing on a lotus flower playing the flute. He is surrounded by a group of *gopīs,* who, intoxicated with love, are looking at him passionately. One of them is offering him a betel leaf, and another waves a *chaurī.* One of the *gopīs* is holding a fan, while another is pulling the wrap which Krishna is wearing over his shoulders. On either side are cowherds gazing furtively at the Līlā. All creation has been attracted by the divine music of his flute which has cast a spell on the milkmaids and cowherds, and even the fish in the Jamuna river are leaping out, intoxicated with love for the Divine Cowherd. In the branches of the *kadamba* tree which is shading Krishna and the *gopīs* are love-birds fluttering with joy. In the clouds in the sky, the *gandharvas,* singers and musicians of the gods, and *apsarās,* voluptuous heavenly nymphs, are singing melodious songs and raining flowers. This is a charming picture suffused with the emotion of love (Plate 27).

The overwhelming power of love is admirably shown in another painting from Tira-Sujanpur (Plate 28). A fire has broken out in the house of some cowherds. One of them enters the cattle-shed to untie the ropes, and the cattle are seen escaping in great panic with tails uplifted. The family of the cowherds is marching out with all its possessions. One man carries a bundle and another a cot. A woman carries a spinning wheel, and others carry baskets containing their precious belongings. Krishna's attention is attracted by the flames; he points to the fire, and makes an attempt to leave but Rādhā holds him back.

The arrival of the monsoons is always a source of great joy to lovers. The rains have come, the mangoes have ripened, and the peacock sitting on the porch of the house is crying with joy (Plate 29). The lovers watch the arrival of the dark rain clouds from a terrace. Krishna and Rādhā have their arms round each other, their eyes gleaming with joy. Rādhā points to the clouds.

In another miniature, a gem of Kangra art, Rādhā and Krishna are shown sitting on the top of a mountain, sheltering from rain under one umbrella (Plate 30). A storm bends the branches of the trees, lightning shines in the dark clouds and rain pours from above. The peacock cries with joy, and Rādhā clasps Krishna, afraid of the rumbling thunder.

> The terrible storm of the month of *Māgha* came in its strength, breaking and bending
> and beating the trees,
> The groves pleased not, cold prevailed, both were afraid, and under one cloth she
> clung to Syāma,
> Now did the shaft of Hari and Rādhā's umbrella bend aside, and from the gathering
> clouds fell heavy rain:
> When day re-appeared, there as it were in a single picture shone resplendent the
> beauty of the Three Worlds.[15]

KRISHNA

Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, belonged to the Yādava tribe, a pastoral people who lived in Brindāban and Gokul, on both sides of the river Jamuna. His parents, Devakī and Vasudeva, were imprisoned by Kansa, the ruler of Mathura, for it had been prophesied that their child would destroy him. Six of their children had already been killed by this evil king, and the seventh, Balarāma, was miraculously transferred to the womb of Rohinī, Vasudeva's second wife. The eighth child of Devakī was Krishna, who was also saved by his father by exchanging him with a daughter born to Yasodā, wife of Nanda, who lived in Gokul, across the Jamuna. It was with Nanda that Rohinī and Balarāma had already taken shelter.

The birth of Krishna ushered in an era of prosperity for Braja, but Kansa had strange forebodings, and felt no peace. Demons were dispatched by him to kill the Divine Child, but all to no avail.

Krishna was a naughty child and his pranks were at once the despair and delight of his mother and the neighbours. He would steal the butter and break the churning vessel, and all his mother's attempts to punish him came to naught. One day Krishna, like most children in the village, was found eating earth. When Yasodā reprimanded him, he denied having done so. On this she asked him to open his mouth. When he did so she saw numberless suns and moons, planets and stars, oceans and continents, mountains and rivers, and in fact the entire universe. Unable to bear the revelation, Yasodā closed her eyes, and bowed her head before his feet, realising that her son was none other than Vishnu himself. The gods, however, drew over her sight the veil of illusion, and she again felt that the child in front of her was only her own son.

Harassed by the demons sent by Kansa, Nanda and his cowherd kinsmen decided to move from Gokul to Brindāban across the river. Their children enjoyed swimming in the river during the heat of the summer, while the cows sat in groups chewing the cud contentedly. Krishna, his brother Balarāma, the cowherds, and the *gopīs* roamed the woods of Brindāban with their graceful trees covered with blossoms. Here Krishna and his companions play hide-and-seek, or sang and danced to music (Plates 31 and 35).

Early in the morning the ropes of the cows are loosened by Krishna, Balarāma and their companions. Krishna borrows a stick from Yasodā while Balarāma collects *laddūs* from a young lady who stands with a *thālī* full of them and wraps them in cloth (Plate 32). The cows have a special attachment for Krishna, and when they see him milk flows freely from their udders, and they low with joy.

In the evening the cows are driven home by Krishna and the cowherds, and the dust which they raise shines like gold, illumined by the slanting rays of the setting sun. The hour of "Cow-dust" is a favourite subject with the Kangra painters.

Another subject popular with the Kangra painters is the magic of Krishna's flute (Plate 36). Krishna, the cowherd, with a black *kambal* thrown over his shoulder, plays the flute on the bank of the Jamuna. A pair of sarus cranes is on the banks of the river. The forest trees entwined by creepers are covered with blossoms, and birds with bright plumage perch on their branches. Hearing the music of the flute, the cows, white, grey, black, and brown, run to its source with tails uplifted. Their necks are decorated with tiny brass bells, and to the poet their beauty is "as if clouds of many hues had been gathered together from every quarter." The cows gaze at Krishna spellbound, their faces uplifted, and their eyes bright with joy. "The sound of Krishna's flute is the voice of Eternity heard by the dwellers in Time. When Krishna plays thereon, it rains delight, resounding like a cloud."[16] The audience, whether of men, birds or beasts, stands fascinated, still like a painted image. The river itself leaves its bed and bends out in a curve to listen to the music.

Another fine painting (Plate 33) shows a feast in the forest. Krishna and his companions are feasting happily under the shade of a giant tree. The group is seated in a circle and is eating out of plates made from *palāsa* and plantain leaf.

Other notable incidents of Krishna's life, popular with Kangra painters, are the subduing of the serpent king Kaliya, the lifting of Mount Govardhana, the stealing of the *gopī's* clothes (*chīra-haran līla*) and the taking of the toll (*dāna-līla*). The many-headed Kaliya poisoned the waters of a lake near the Jamuna but was conquered by Krishna who danced in triumph upon his hoods. Indra, the king of the heavenly deities, felt jealous of his diminishing power over the inhabitants. In anger he sent down torrential rains but they took shelter under Mount Govardhana which Krishna lifted on his little finger. The maids of Braja had their clothes stolen by him as they bathed nude in the river and only got them back after many prayers and entreaties. They were also stopped by him as they crossed the ferry, and he would steal curds and butter from them pretending that they were his due as legal toll.

Krishna plays his flute on a perfumed moonlit night of autumn on the banks of the Jamuna, and on hearing it the girls of Braja abandon their families, forget their shyness and start for the river. But when they arrive he tells them to go back to their husbands. "Love for me is born more through hearing, singing, seeing, and contemplation," he says, "than by mere physical proximity." The milkmaids protest saying that they have renounced all material objects and conventional ties of family life to come to him. Krishna smiles, recognises their love, and invites them to a dance. Being thus honoured, the *gopīs* are full of pride and consider themselves superior to other women in the world. Seeing their pride, Krishna disappears, abandoning them.

Taking only Rādhā with him Krishna roams the forest, listening to the song of birds, the humming of bees, and the harping of the forest winds. When they are tired they sit together on the dark stem of a *Bauhinia* tree, under the shade of a mango tree and a clump of plantains, looking at each other like a pair of love-birds (Plate 38).

Rādhā is very happy, and thinks that Krishna is now fully under her charm. Proud in this belief she asks Krishna to carry her on his shoulders, but as she attempts to climb up, he disappears. Rādhā wanders in the beautiful forest of Brindāban in search of him. She laments his disappearance and asks the trees of his whereabouts but there is no answer (Plate 37).

In his *Gītagovinda,* Jayadeva narrates the story of the separation and reconciliation of Rādhā in the form of a pastoral drama. The actors are Krishna, Rādhā, the *gopīs* and the *dūtikā*, the lovers' messenger. The scene is laid in the forest of Brindāban. Rādhā sits under a tree, and Krishna dances with the *gopīs* at a distance on the bank of the Jamuna. The air is heavy with the fragrance of flowers. The beautiful Rādhā, whose limbs are like flowers of the *mādhavī* creeper, looks for Krishna in the trackless forest. A damsel brings news of Krishna's whereabouts in the blossoming spring:

> O Rādhā! it is Spring that thrills with love divine even the hearts of those who have controlled all their passions.
> It has come laden with flowers, it has come as the unbidden, uncontrolled rapture of youth!
> Look yonder! where even the sleeping mango tree, clasped by the delicate creeper, grows conscious with love and quivers with joy, bursts out in those tender purple shoots!
> The Spring wakens life.
> O Rādhā! yonder there on the bank of the river Jamuna, in the groves watered by its blue limpid waves, Sri Krishna is playing with the brides of Vrindāvanam!
>
> ....
>
> There is He, the sky-coloured figure anointed with sandal and enrobed in gold, wearing a garland made of wild flowers and forest leaves!
> And see how the curls of his tresses fall on his temples, as He sports hand in hand with a hundred brides.[17]

The worldly pleasures are personified by the milkmaids, and Krishna, forgetting Rādhā's devotion, revels with them.

Rādhā is the human soul in search of God and ultimately her love and devotion attract Krishna, who leaves the *gopīs* to search for Rādhā. A *dūtikā* approaches him, and describes the love pangs of pining Rādhā. The messenger then goes to Rādhā to tell her that Krishna waits for her eagerly in a bower.

Rādhā prepares to meet Krishna, adorning herself with necklaces of pearls, gold bracelets and a pearl nose-ring. She meets Krishna in a bower of *tamāla* trees festooned with *atimuktā* creepers laden with blossoms. Krishna has spread his dark blanket on the ground, and the divine lovers rest on it. A *chakora* pair appears in the foreground, where there is a lake full of lotus flowers and leaves. The peacocks are perched on trees and dark clouds can be seen in the sky. Krishna wears a white garland and a crown decorated with peacock feathers. He is braiding Rādhā's hair, while she looks at him as does the thirsty *chātaka* at the rain clouds (Plate 39).

M. S. Randhawa

NOTES

1 Coomaraswamy, *Rājpūt Painting*, p. 14

2 *Ibid.*, p. 22

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*, p. 7

6 Okakura, *Ideals of the East*, p. 229

7 These are *Chaitra*, March-April; *Baisākh*, April-May; *Jyeshtha*, May-June; *Āsārh*, June-July; *Sāwan*, July-August; *Bhādon*, August-September; *Asūj*, September-October; *Kārtik*, October-November; *Mangsar*, November-December; *Poh*, December-January; *Māgh*, January-February; *Phāgun*, February-March.

8 See also plate 34 where Rādhā and her friends play Holī with Krishna and his boisterous company.

9 Grierson, *Satsaiyā of Bihāri*, p. 8

10 Coomaraswamy, *Rājpūt Painting*, p. 50

11 ————, "Notes on the Eight Nayikas," *Journal of Indian Art*, XVI (October 1914), p. 106

12 ————, *Rājpūt Painting*, p. 47

13 *Ibid.*, p. 52

14 See "Bhāṣā-bhūṣana" of Jaswant Singh in Grierson, *Satsaiyā of Bihārī.*

15 Coomaraswamy, *Rājpūt Painting*, p. 54

16 *Ibid.*, p. 32

17 Puran Singh, *Spirit of Oriental Poetry*, pp. 148, 150

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Chart showing the Genesis and Evolution of Kangra Art

Century	Year	Paramount Power and some major events	Mystics and Poets of the Bhakti movement	Rulers of Hill States of Kangra Valley*			
				Basohli	Guler	Kangra	Nurpur
12th	1182	1137 1170 Prithvirāj	Rāmānuja Jayadeva				
13th	1206 1290	Slave Dynasty					
14th	1320 1400	Khiljī Dynasty Tughlak Dynasty 1350 Taimūr sacks Delhi 1398	Rāmānand Vaishnava Revival				
15th		1440 1477 1483	Kabīr Nānak Sūradās		Haripur-Guler founded by Harī Chand c. 1405		
16th	1526 1556	Bābar 1504 1518 Humāyūn 1532 1540 Akbar 1573 1581	Mīrābāī Tulasī Dās Jāyasī Kesavadās Rajput Hindu Art	Persian Art			
17th	1605 1628 1658	Jehāngīr Capture of Kangra fort by Jehāngīr 1622 Shahjehān 1662 Aurangzeb 1675	Mughal Hindi Lyric Poetry Bihārī Lāl Guru Gobind Singh	School Basohli School	Vijay Chand c. 1605 Rūp Chand c. 1610 Mān Singh 1635 Bikram Singh 1661 Rāj Singh c. 1675 Dalīp Singh 1695	Vijay Rām Chand c. 1660 Udai Rām Chand 1687 Bhīm Chand c. 1690 Ālam Chand c. 1697 Hamīr Chand 1700	Jagat Singh 1619—46 Rājrūp Singh 1646—61 Māndhātā 1661—17
18th		Mohd. Shah 1719 Nadir Shah's invasion 1739 Ahmed Shah Abdali's invasion 1747 Sikhs take Lahore 1765	Kangra	School	Govardhan Chand 1730 Prakāsh Chand 1760 Bhūp Singh 1790	Abhaya Chand 1747 Ghamand Chand 1751 Sansār Chand II 1786 Capture of Kangra Fort by Sansār Chand II 1789	Dayādhātā 1700—35 Prithvī Singh 1735—89
19th	1811 1846	Annexation of Kangra by Ranjit Singh } Sikh Raj in the Punjab 1806-1840 British occupation of Kangra Valley	Sikh	School	Annexation of Guler by the Sikhs 1811 Shamsher Singh 1820 Jai Singh 1878	Gurkha invasion of Kangra Valley 1805 Anirudh Chand 1823 Flight to Tehri-Garhwal 1831	Bīr Singh 1789—1846 Jaswant Singh 1846
20th	1905	Kangra Earthquake			Raghunāth Singh 1920		

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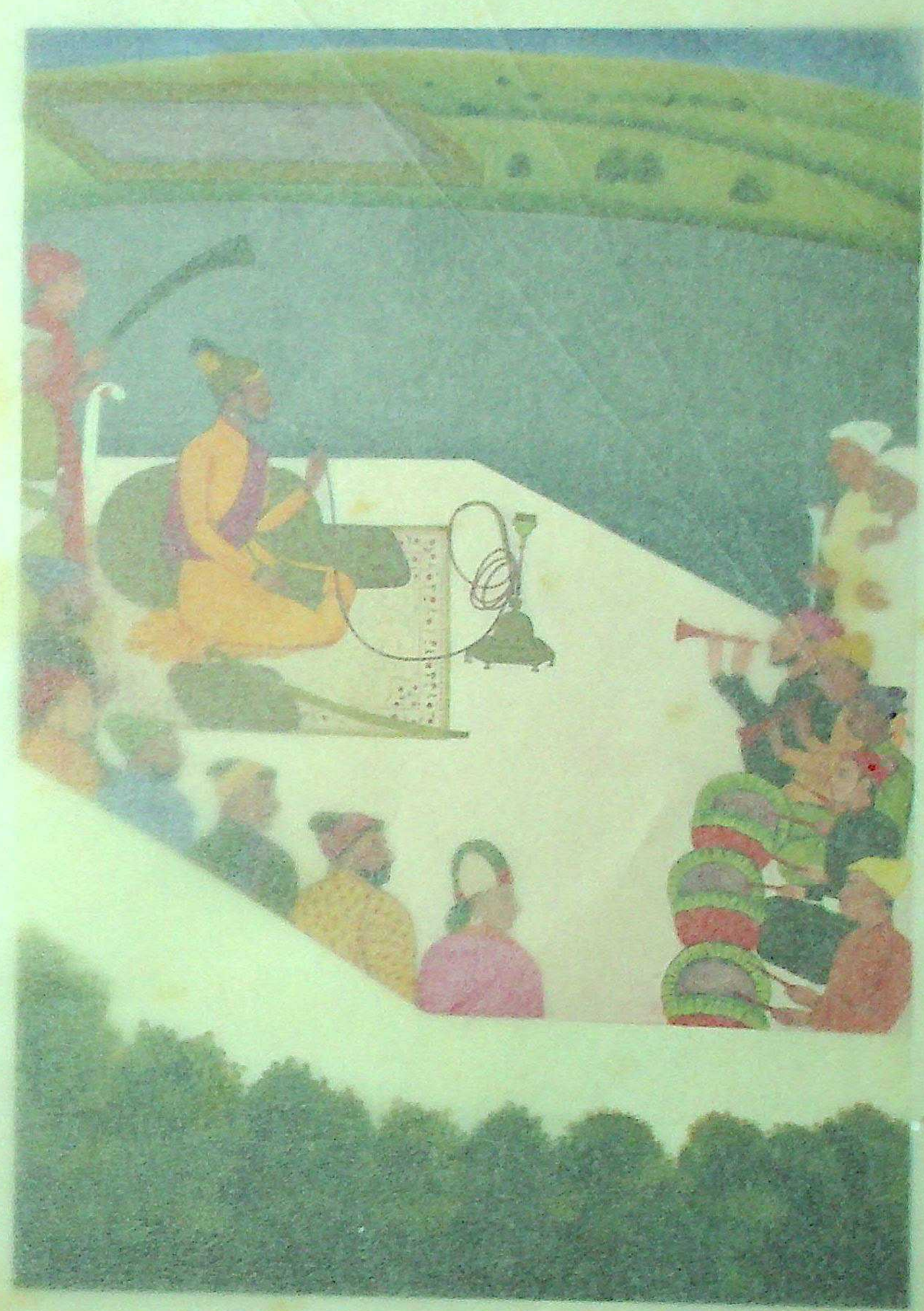
* The dates of rulers of Hill States are according to Hutchinson & Vogel, *History of the Punjab Hill States*



1. Govardhan Chand of Haripur-Guler
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)

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Chart showing the Genesis and Evolution of Kangra Art

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15th		1440 1477 1483	Vaishnava Revival Kabir Nānak Sūradās		Haripur-Guler founded by Hari Chand c. 1405		
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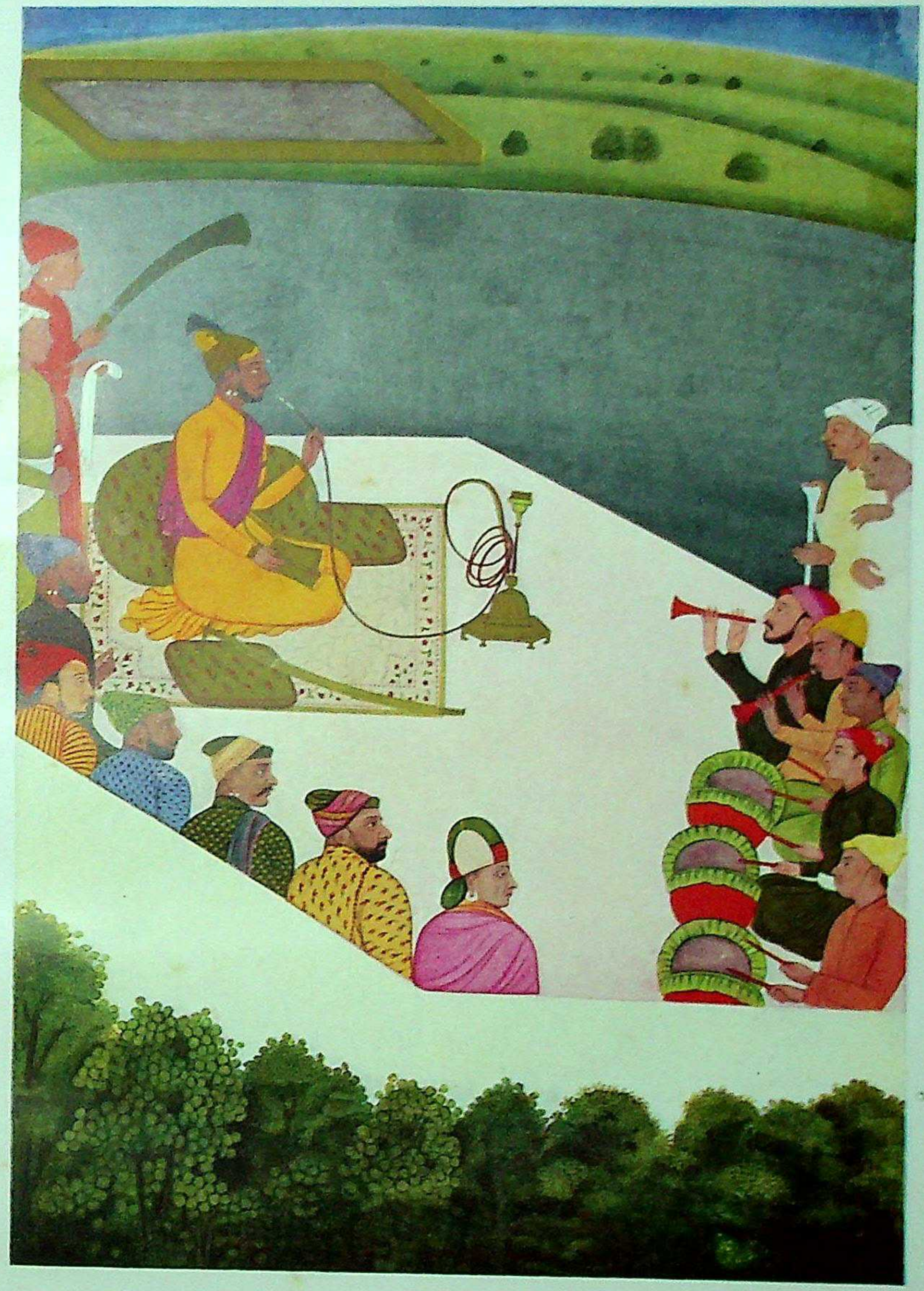
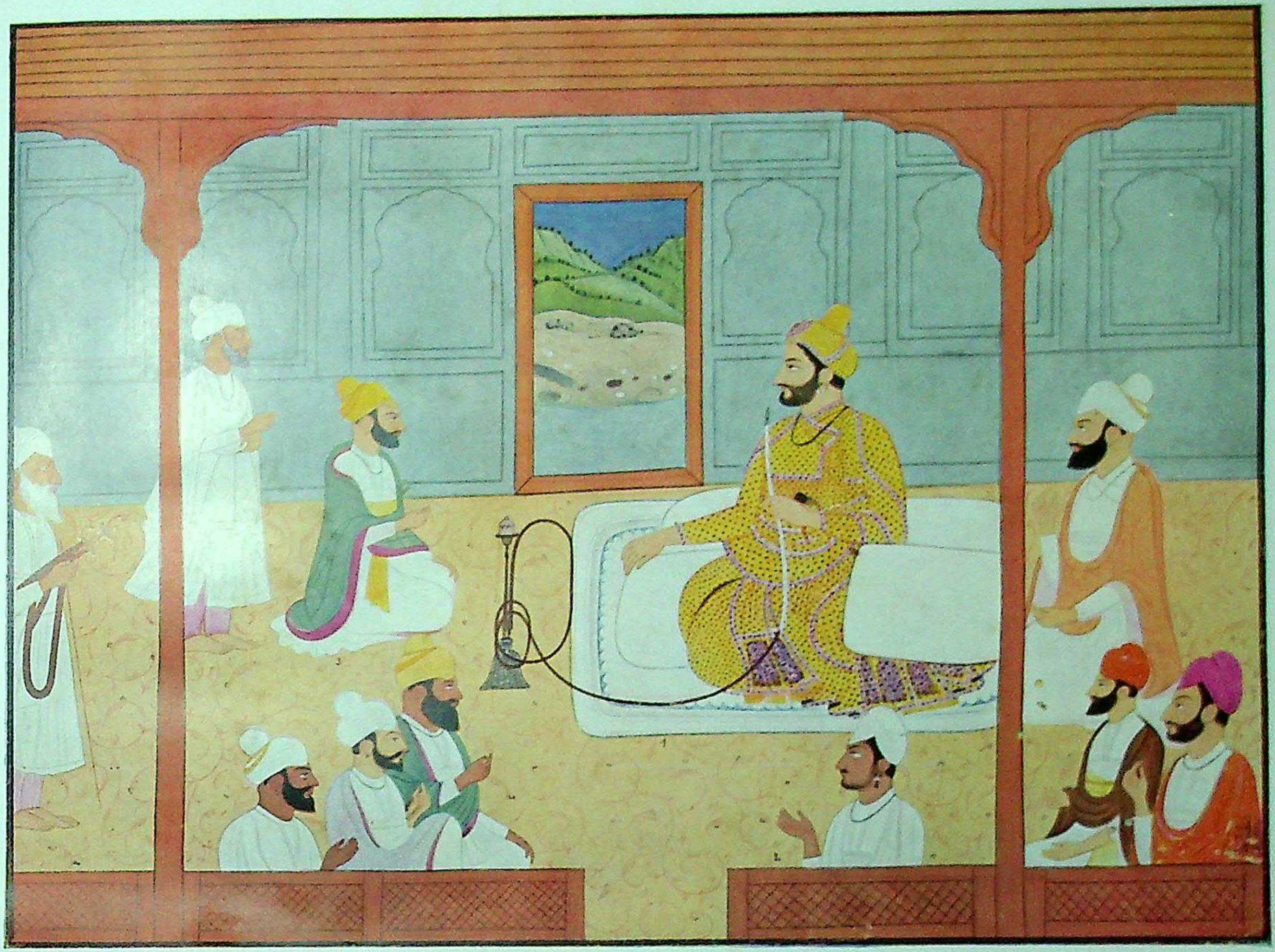
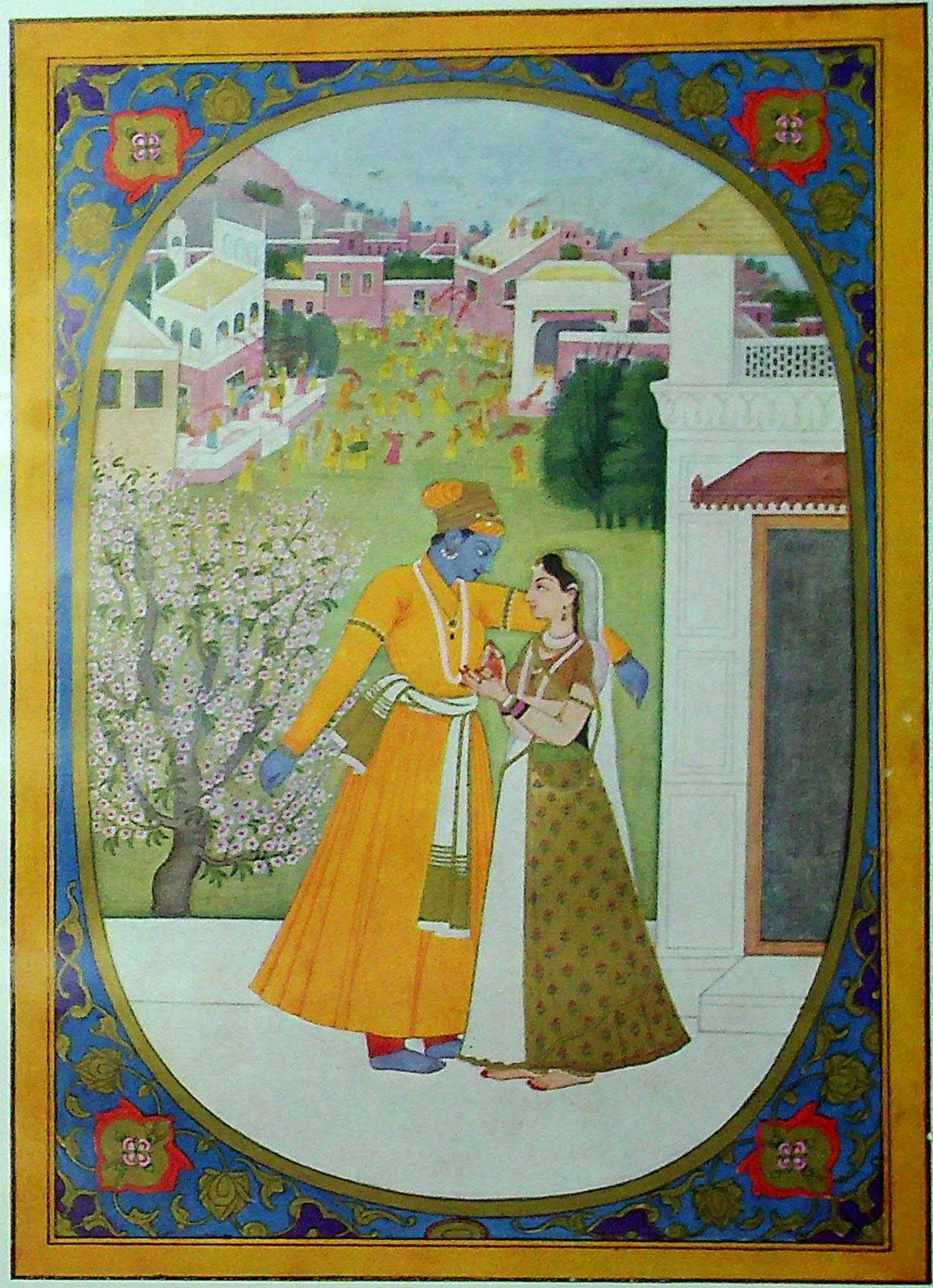
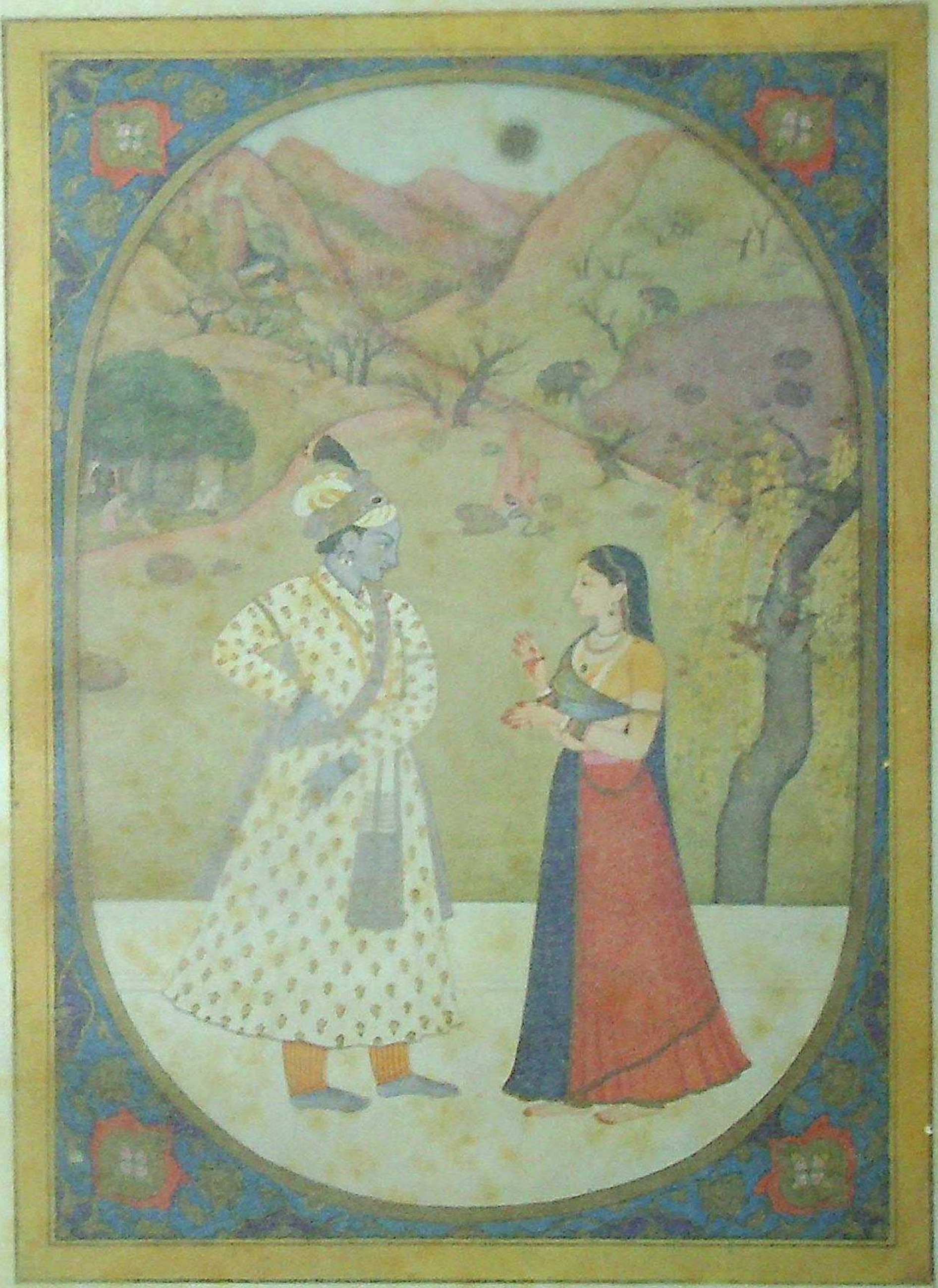
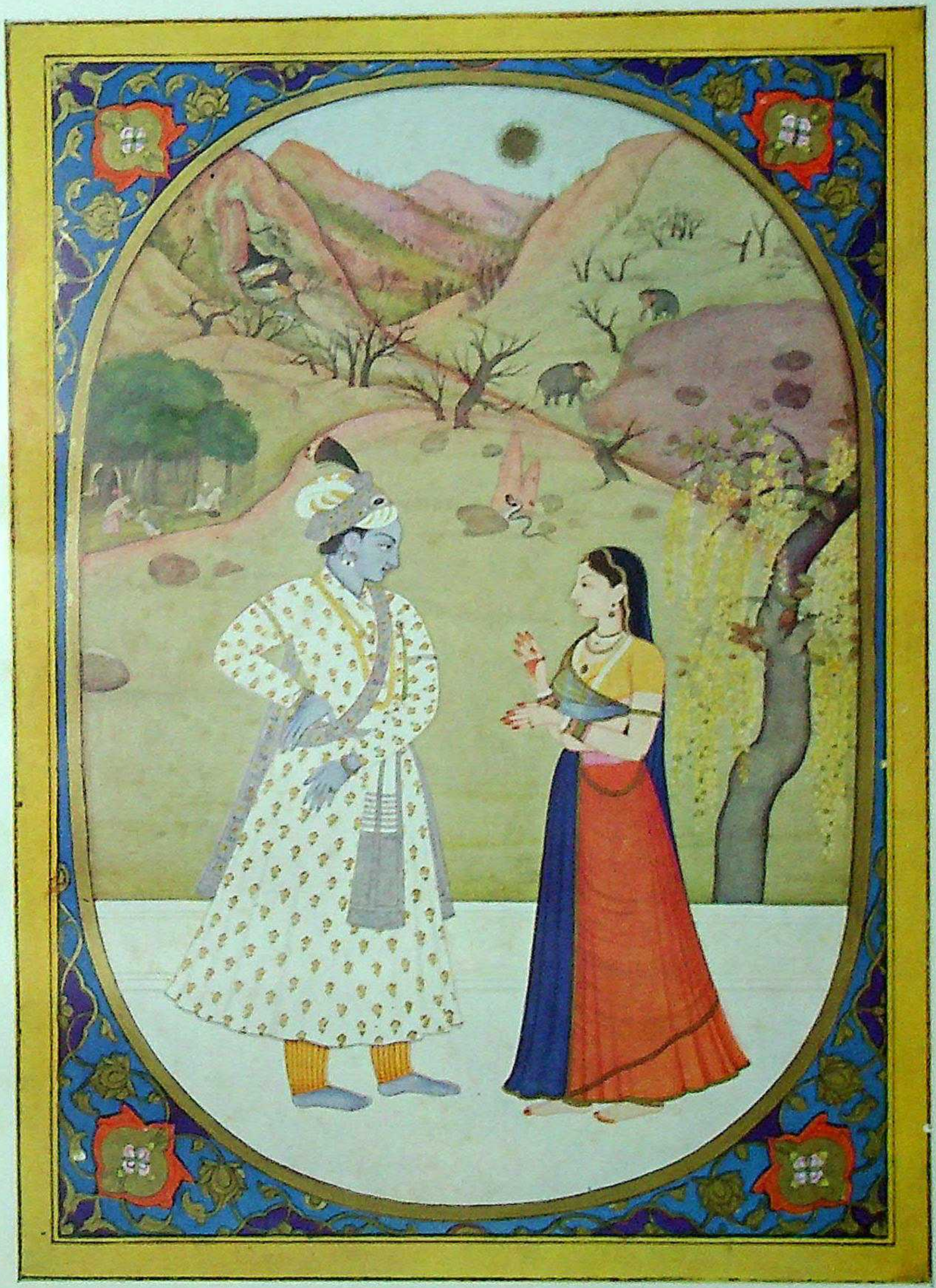


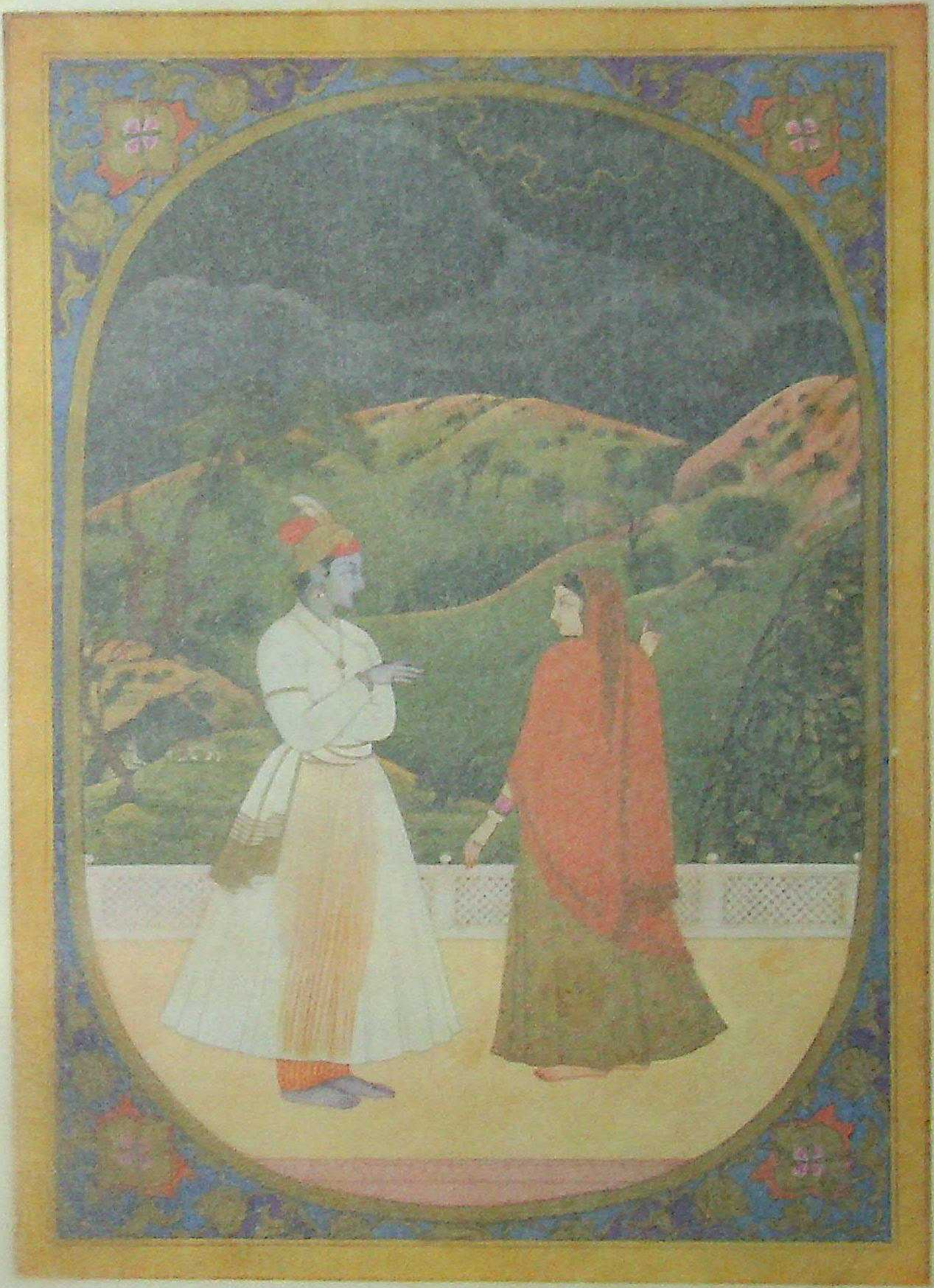






4. Summer
(*Raja of Lambagraon Collection*)





5. The Rains
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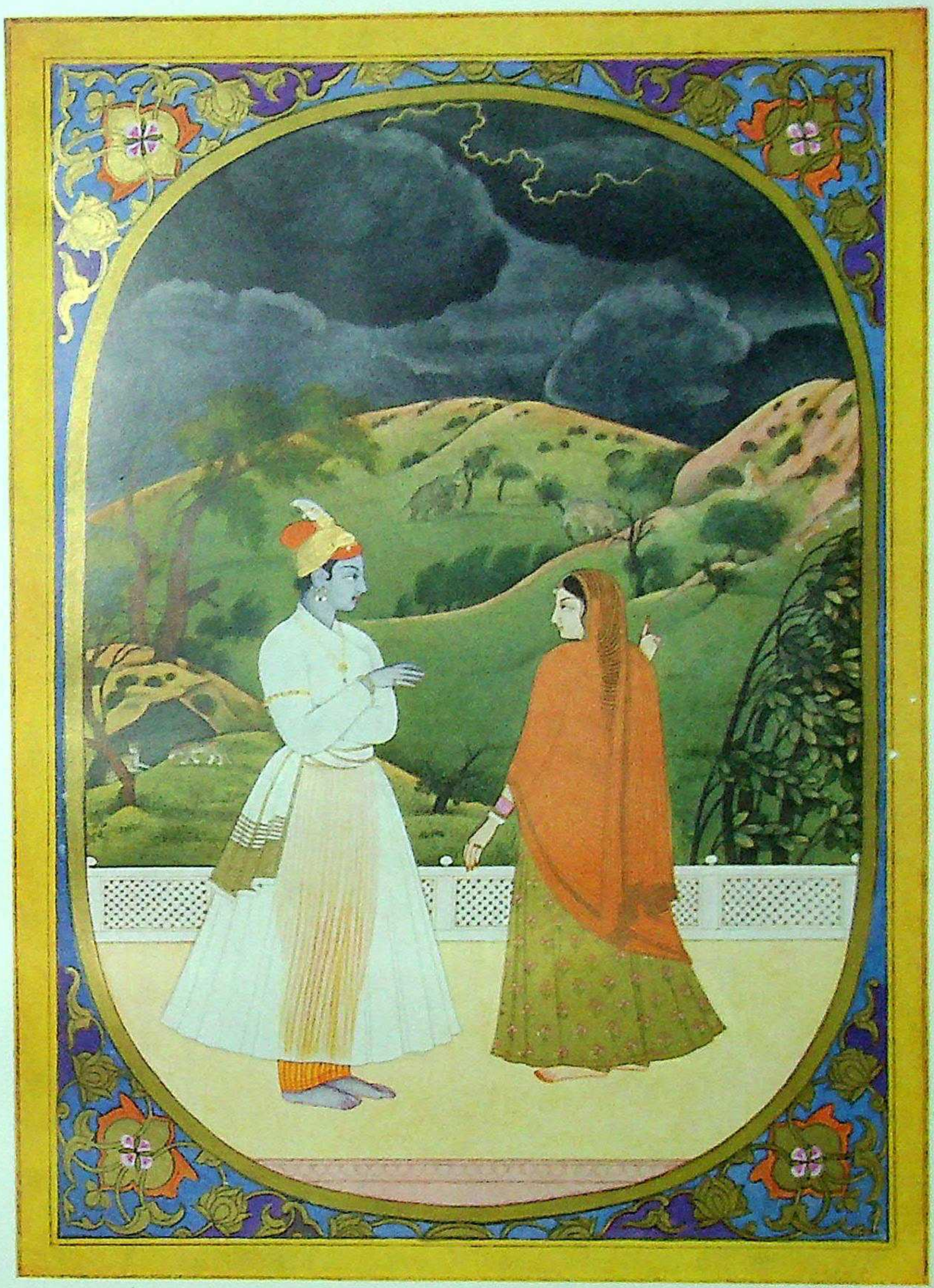
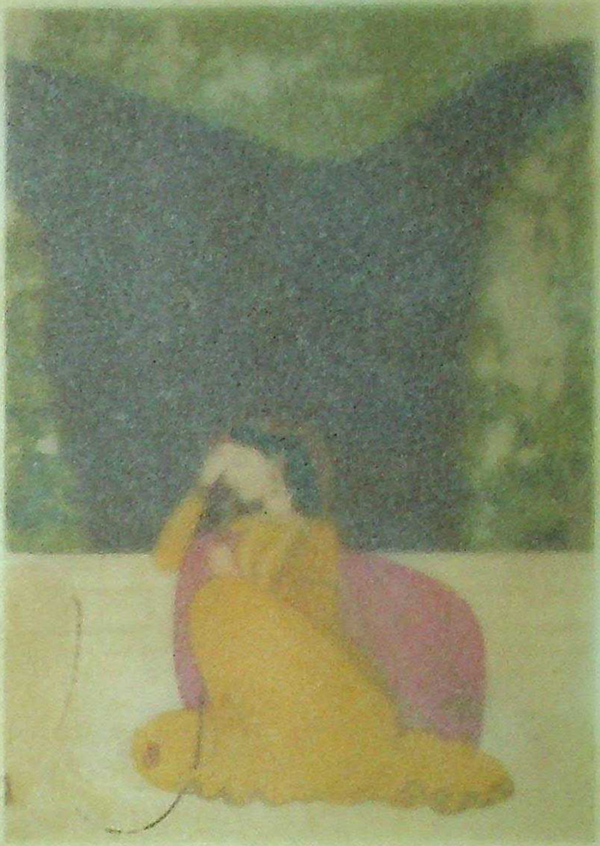
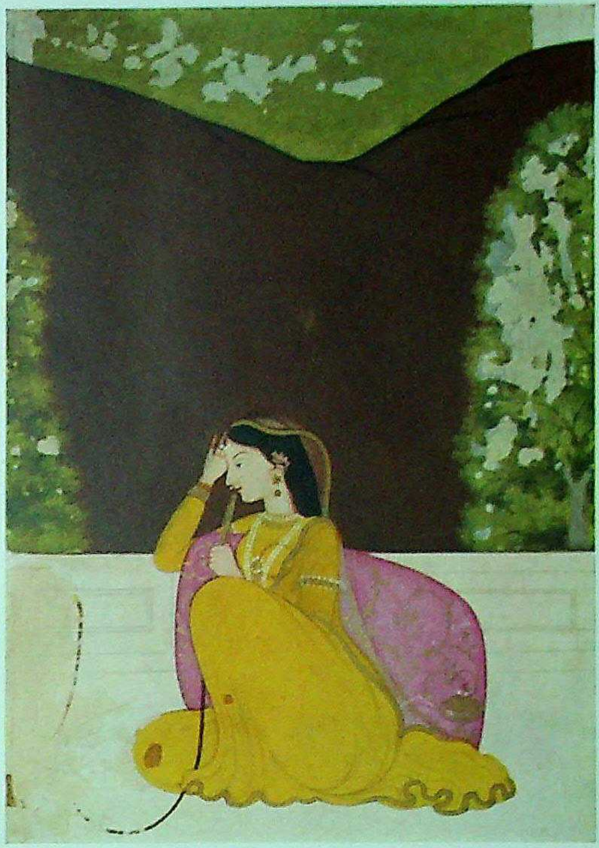
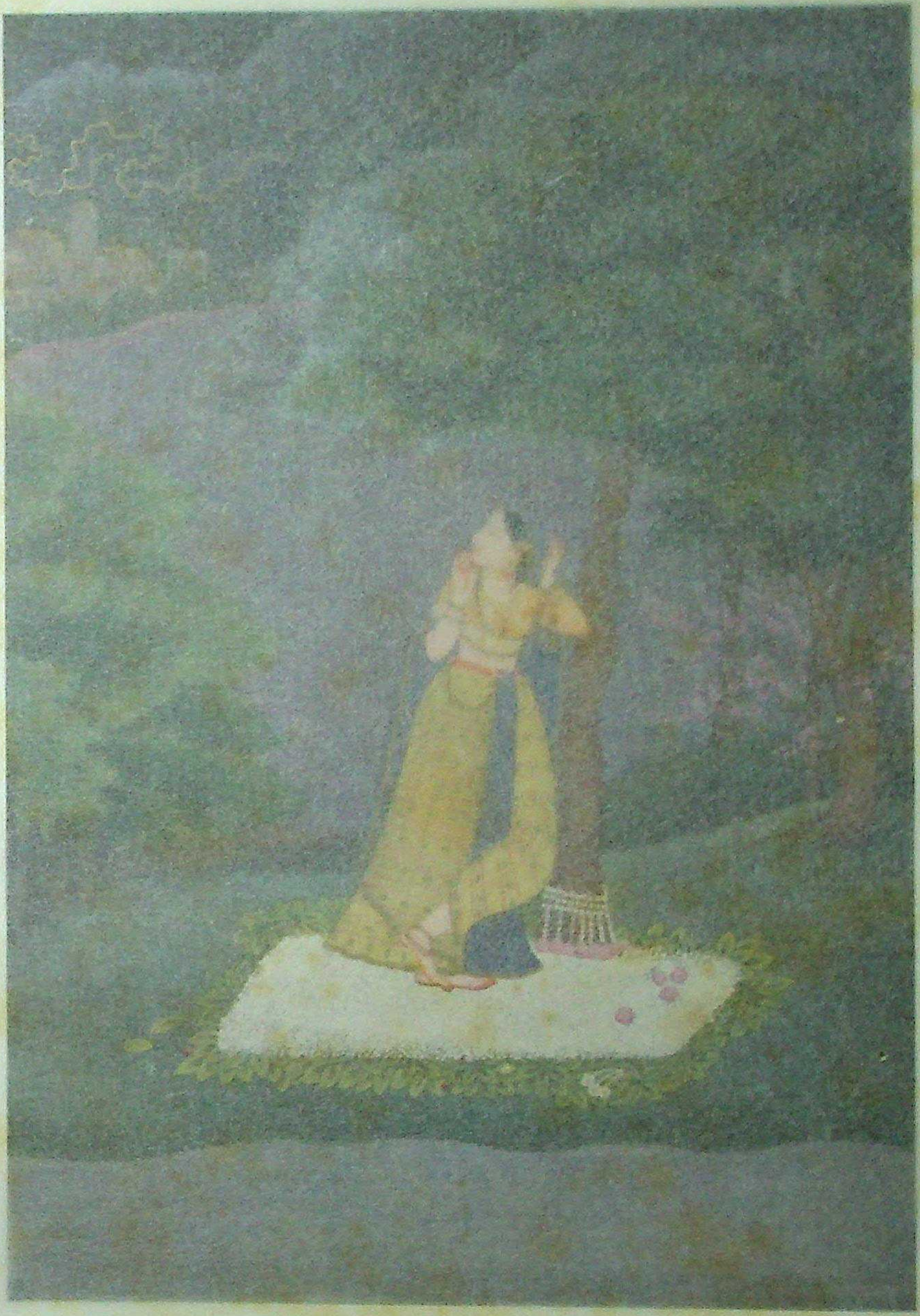


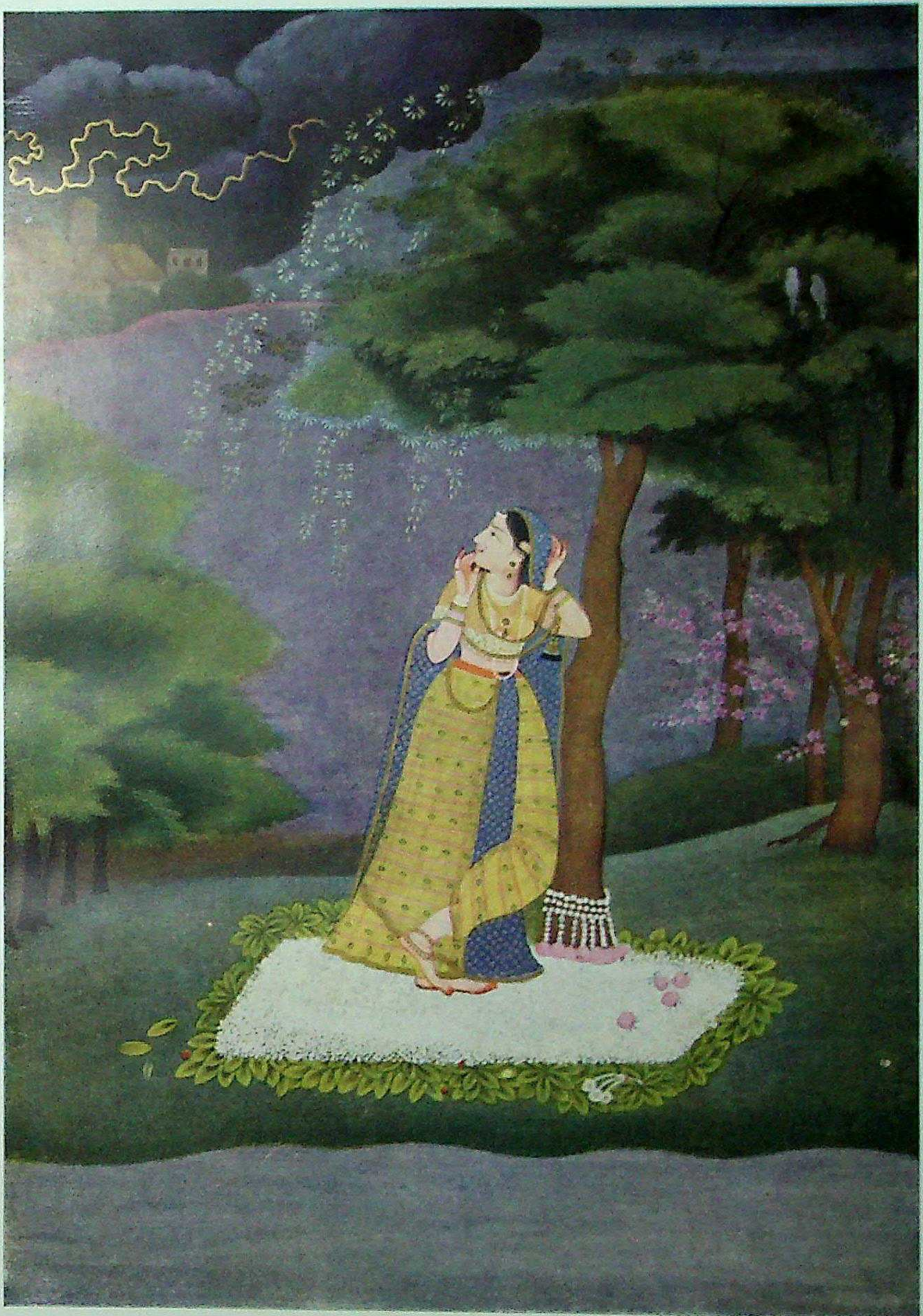


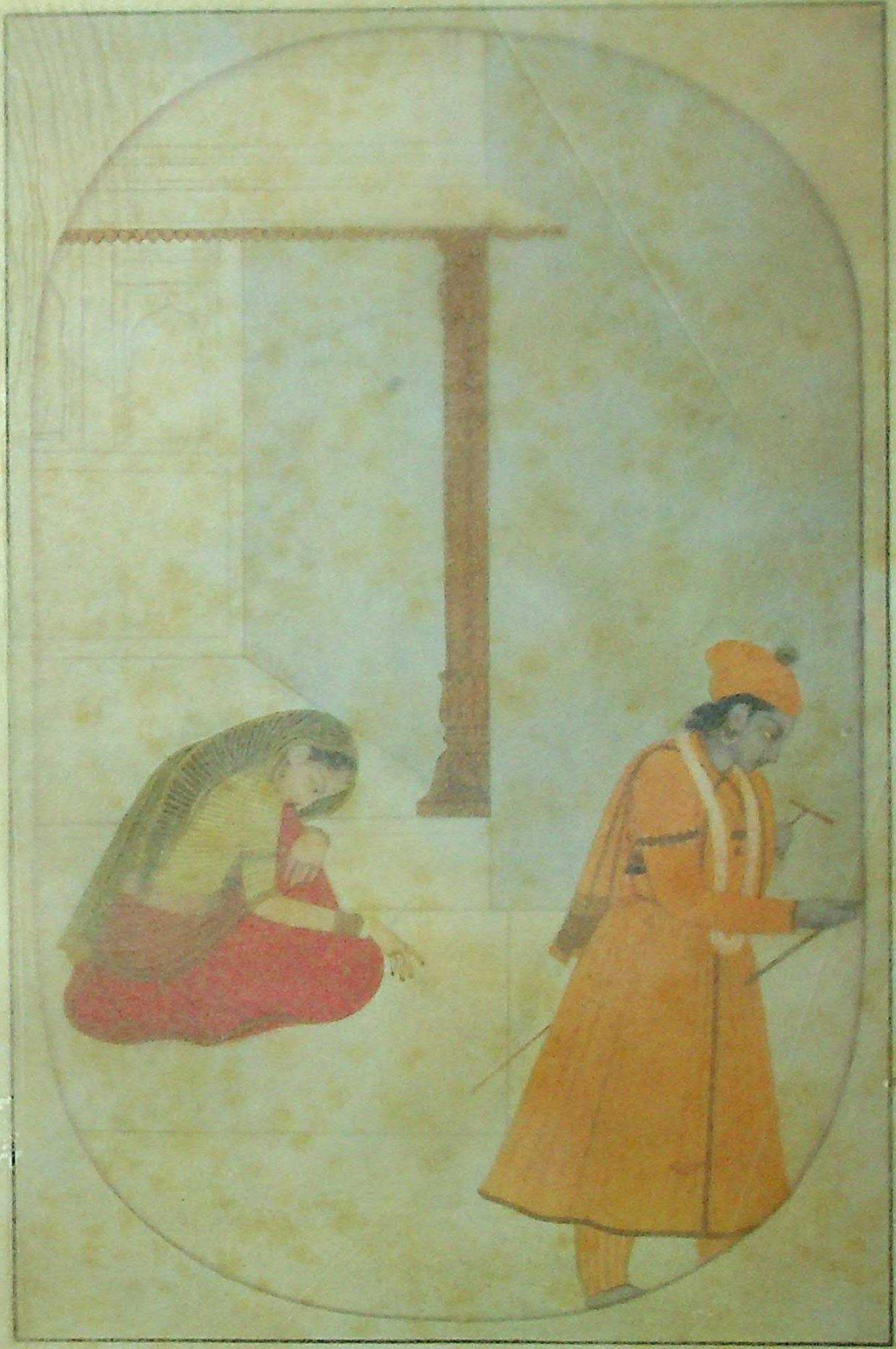
6. Princess Smoking
(*Mian Kartar Singh Collection*)



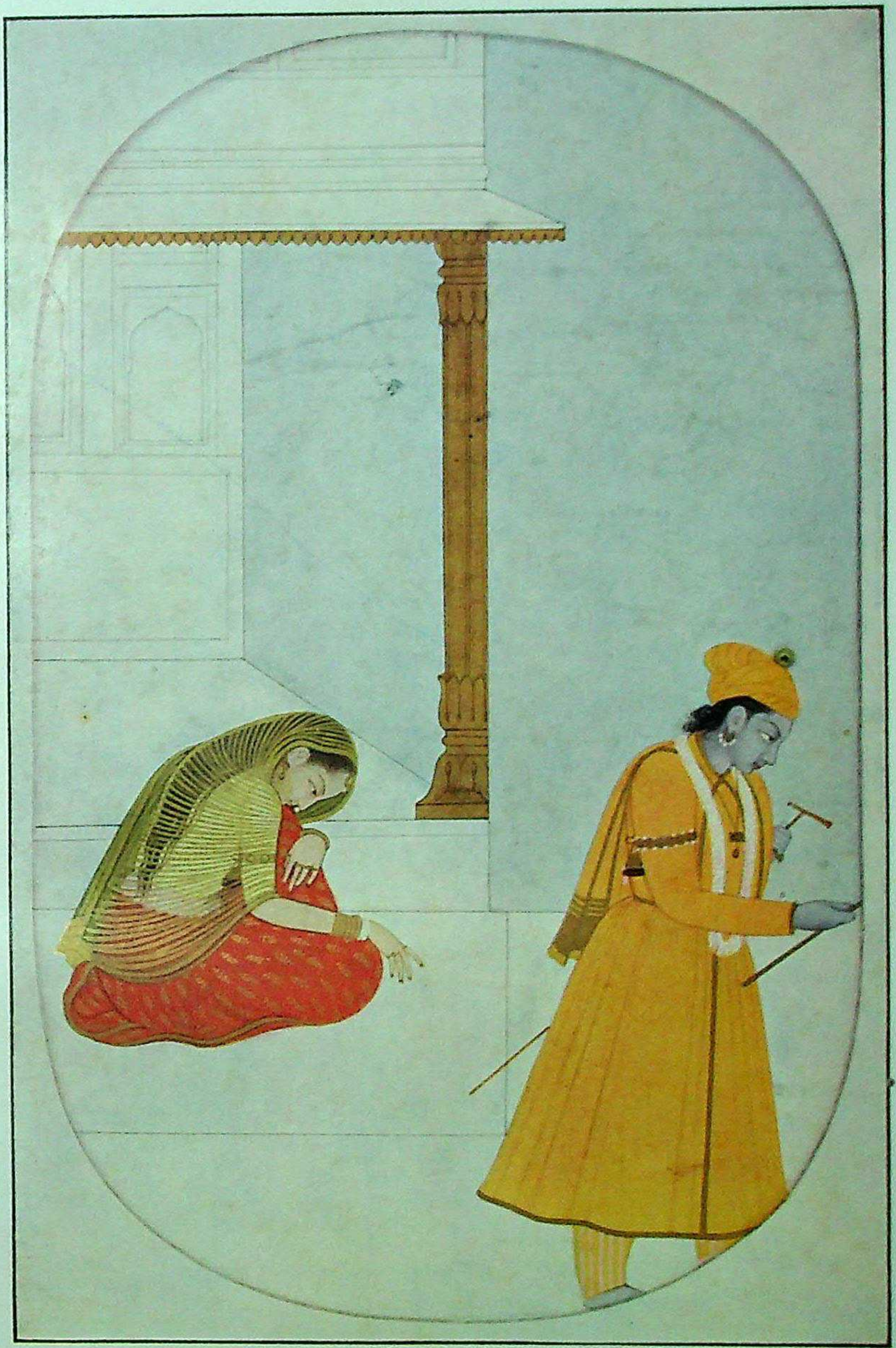


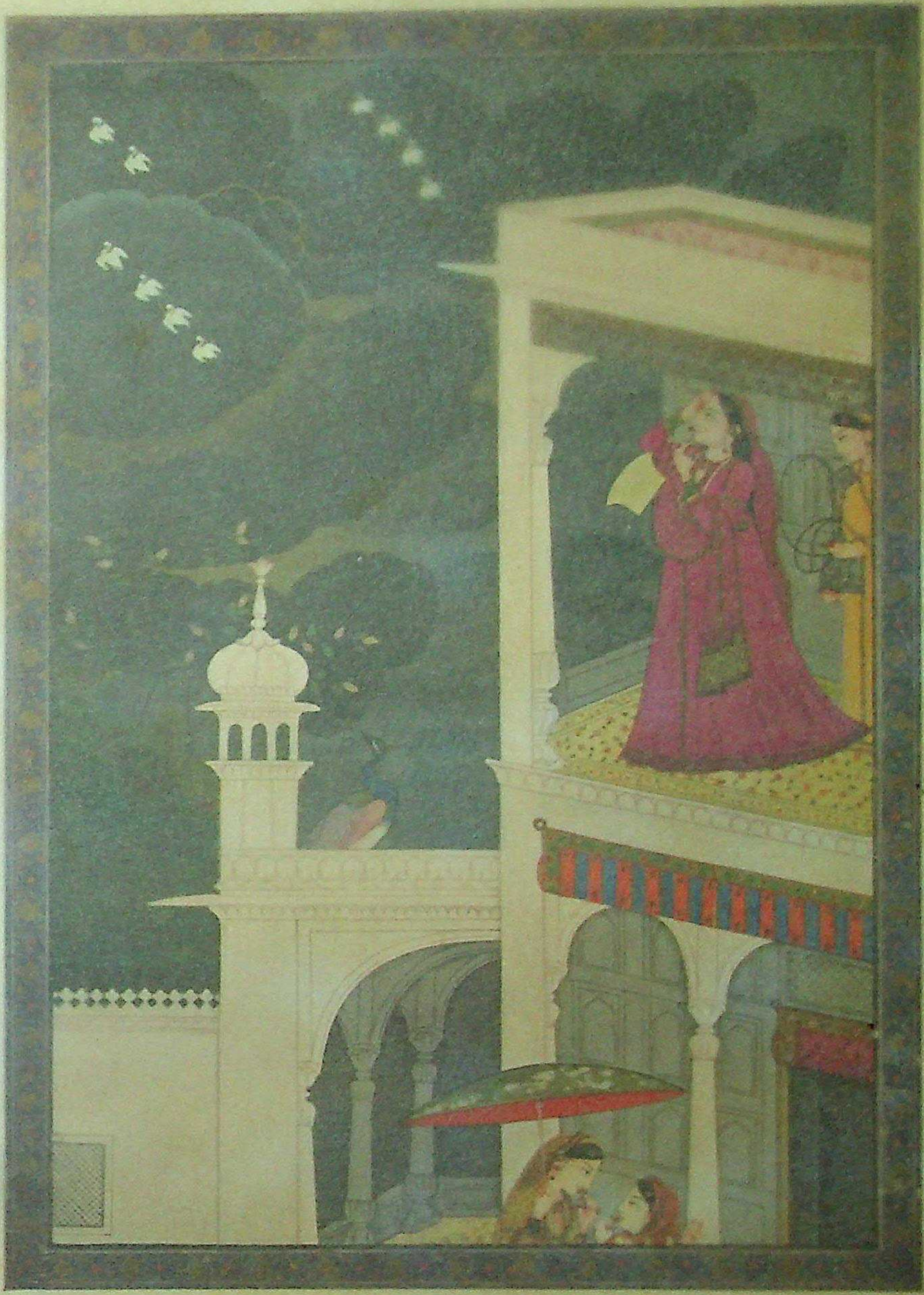
7. Beloved's Vigil
(*Raja of Lambagraon Collection*)



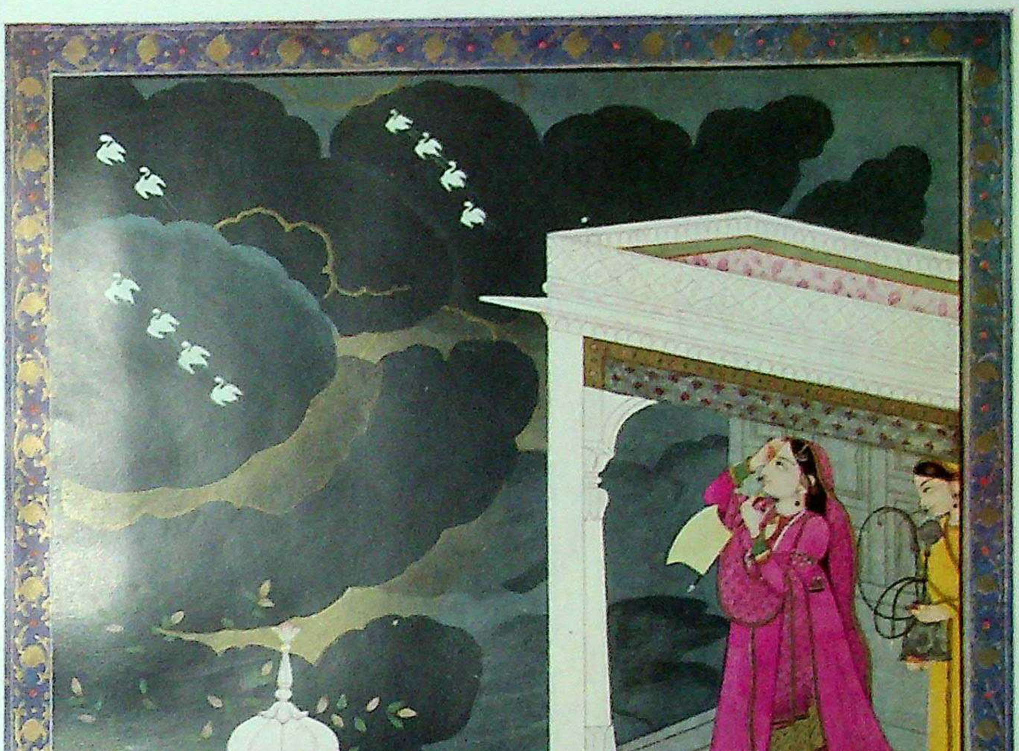


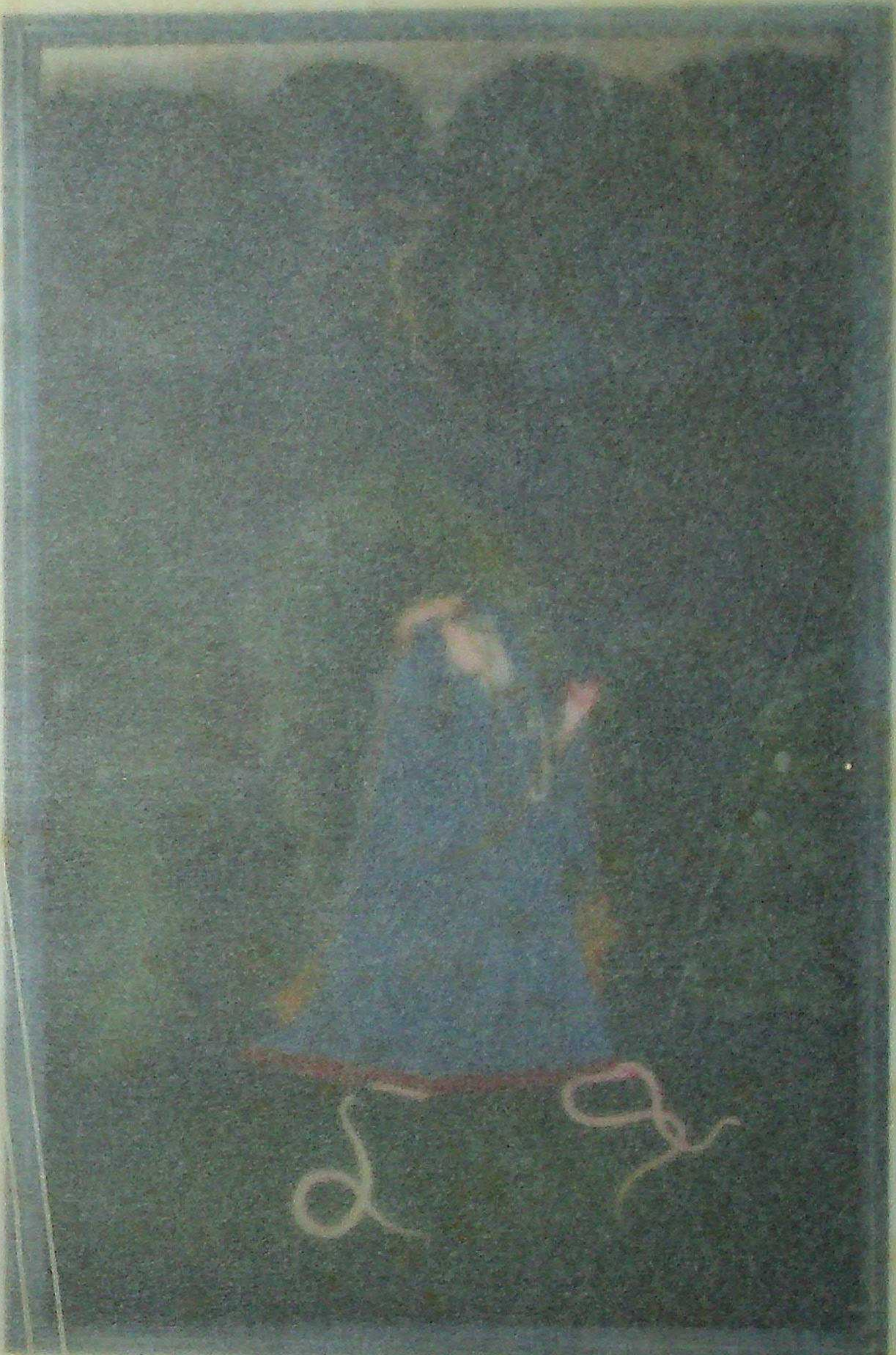
8. Lovers' Quarrel
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)



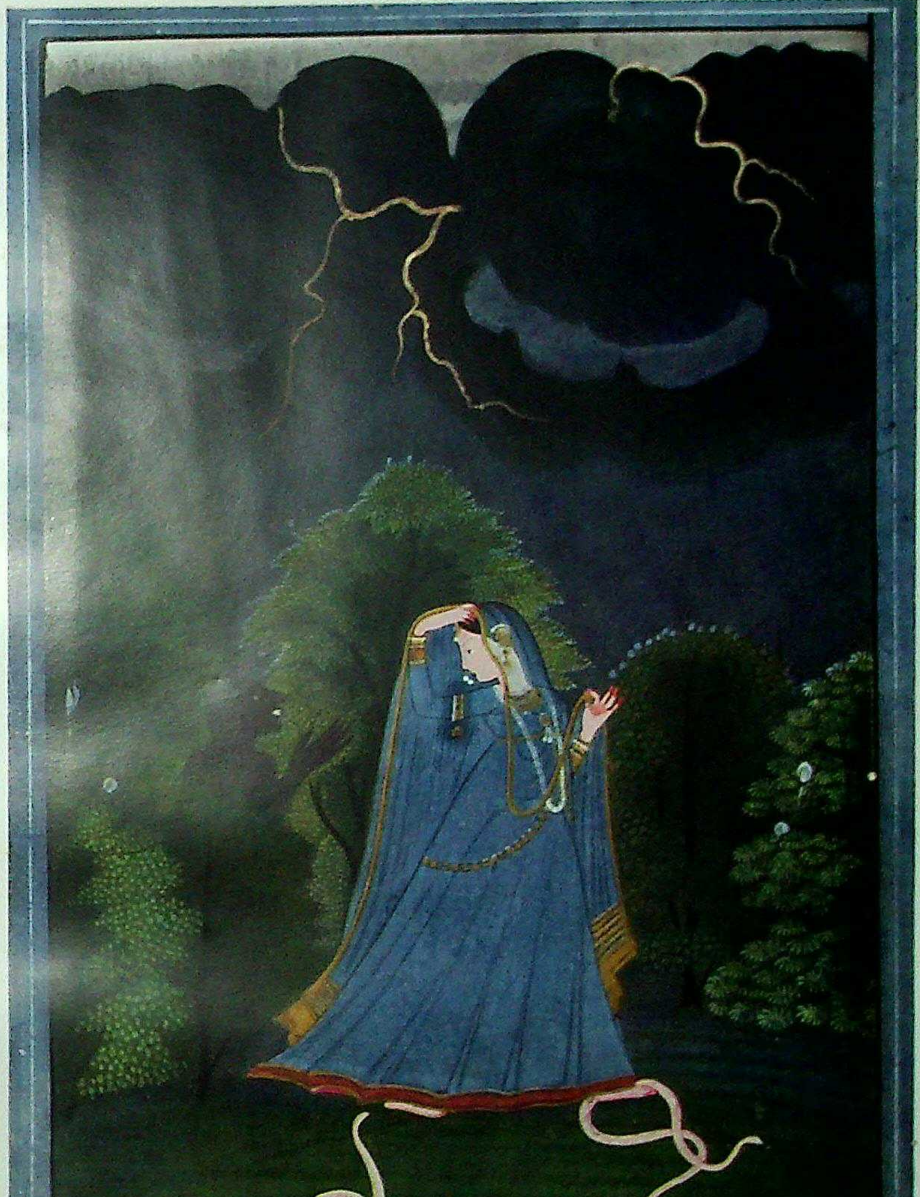


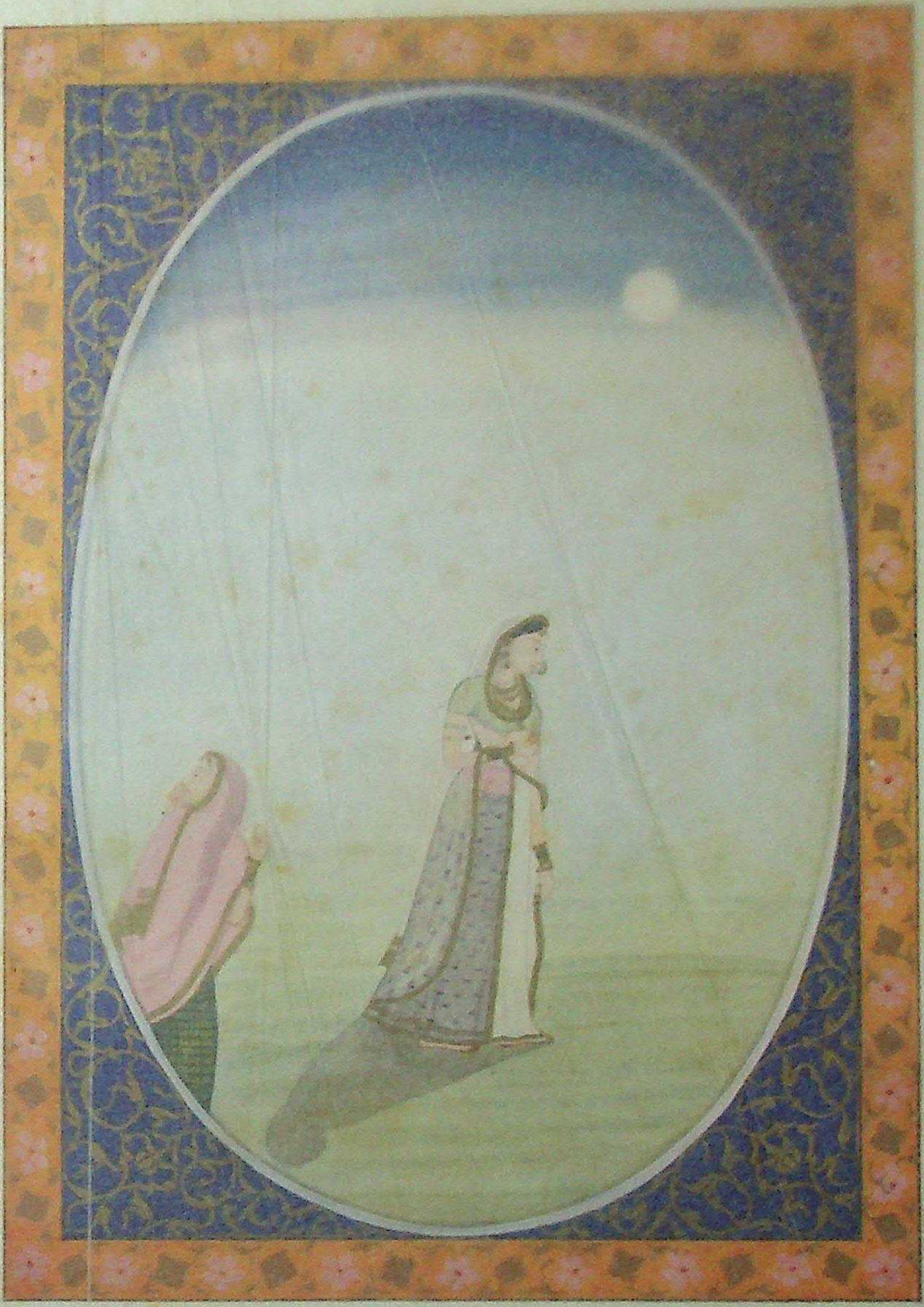
9. The Lonely Lady
(*Captain Sunder Singh Collection*)



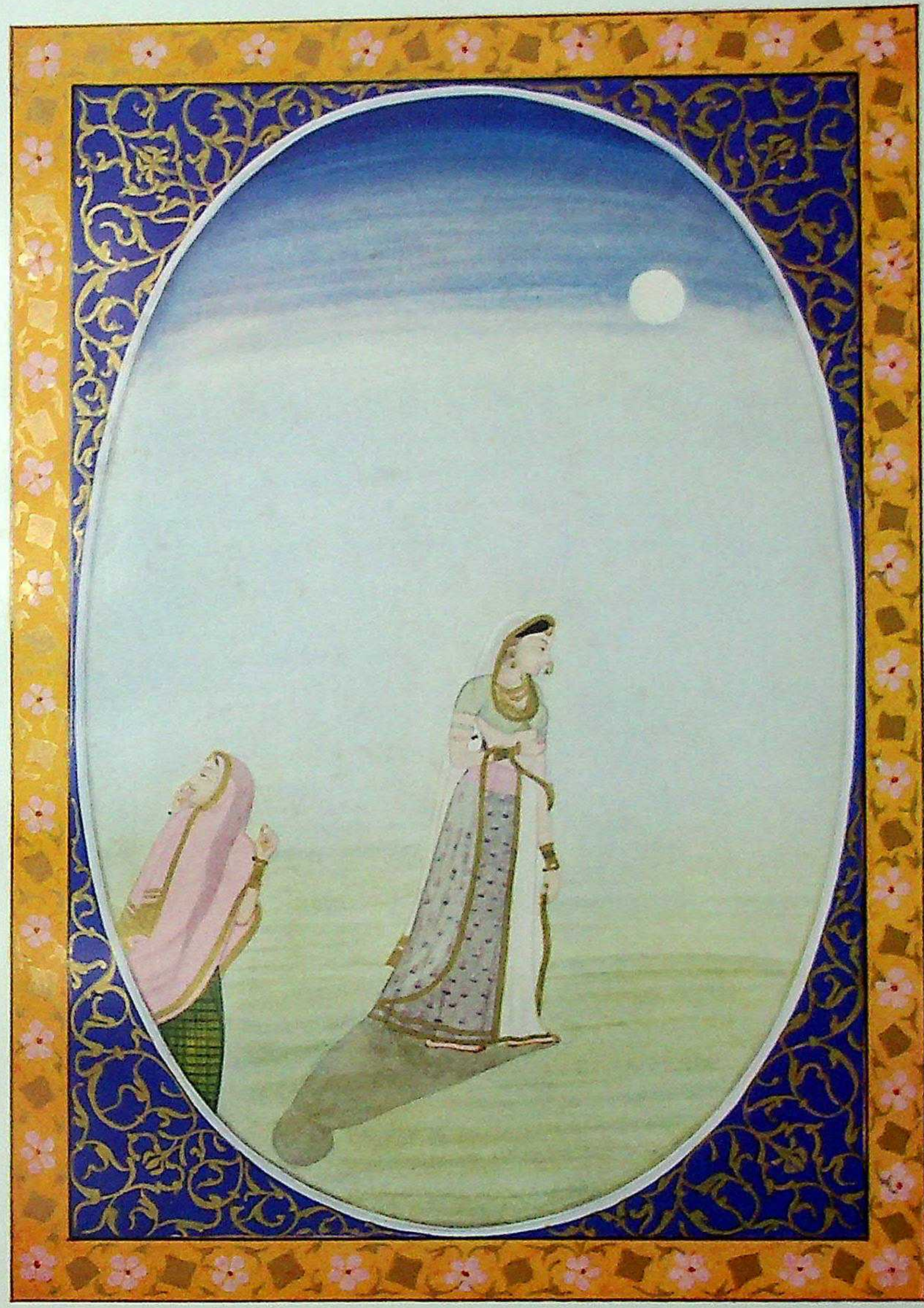


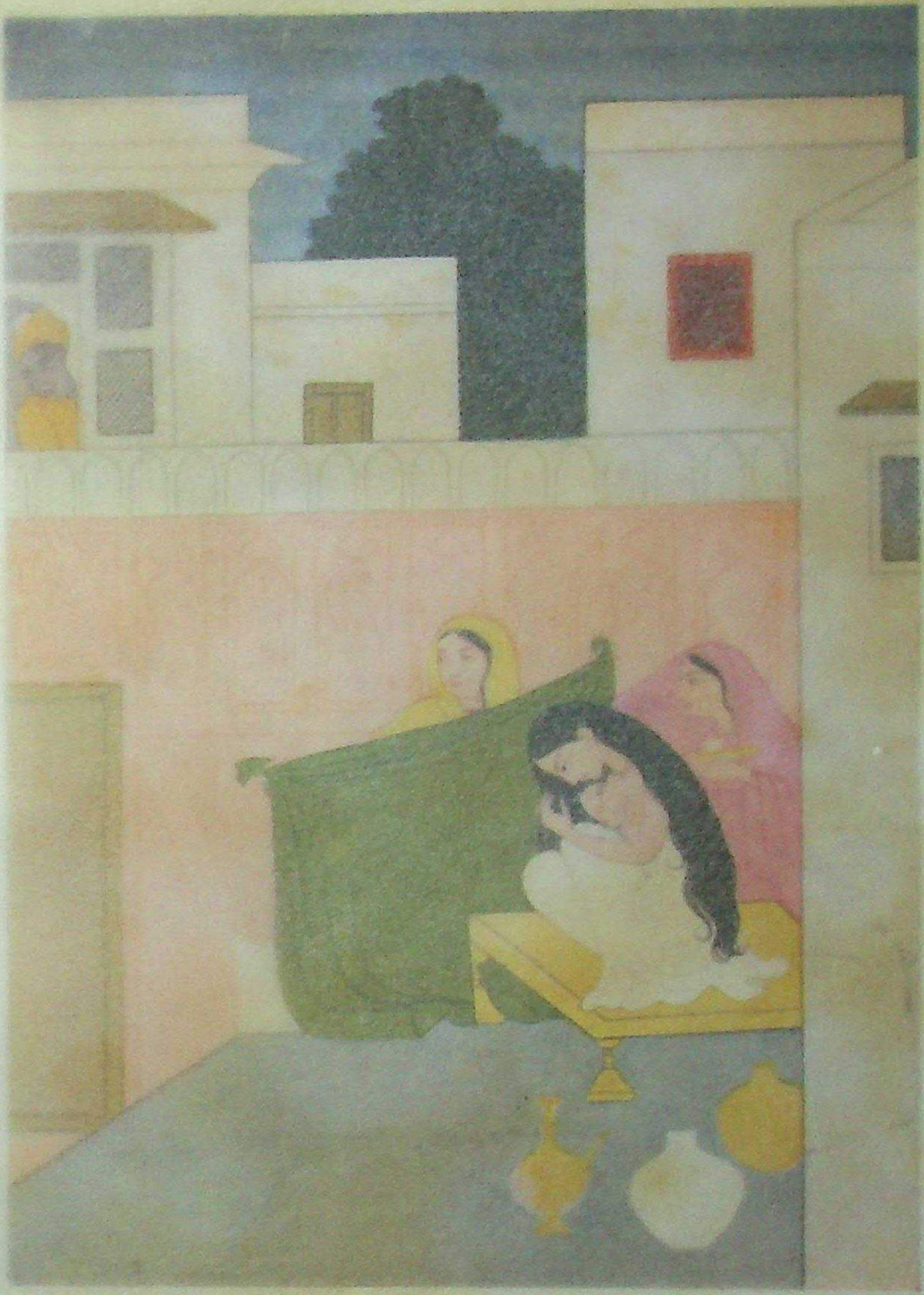
10. To the Tryst by Night
(Raja of Lambagraon Collection)



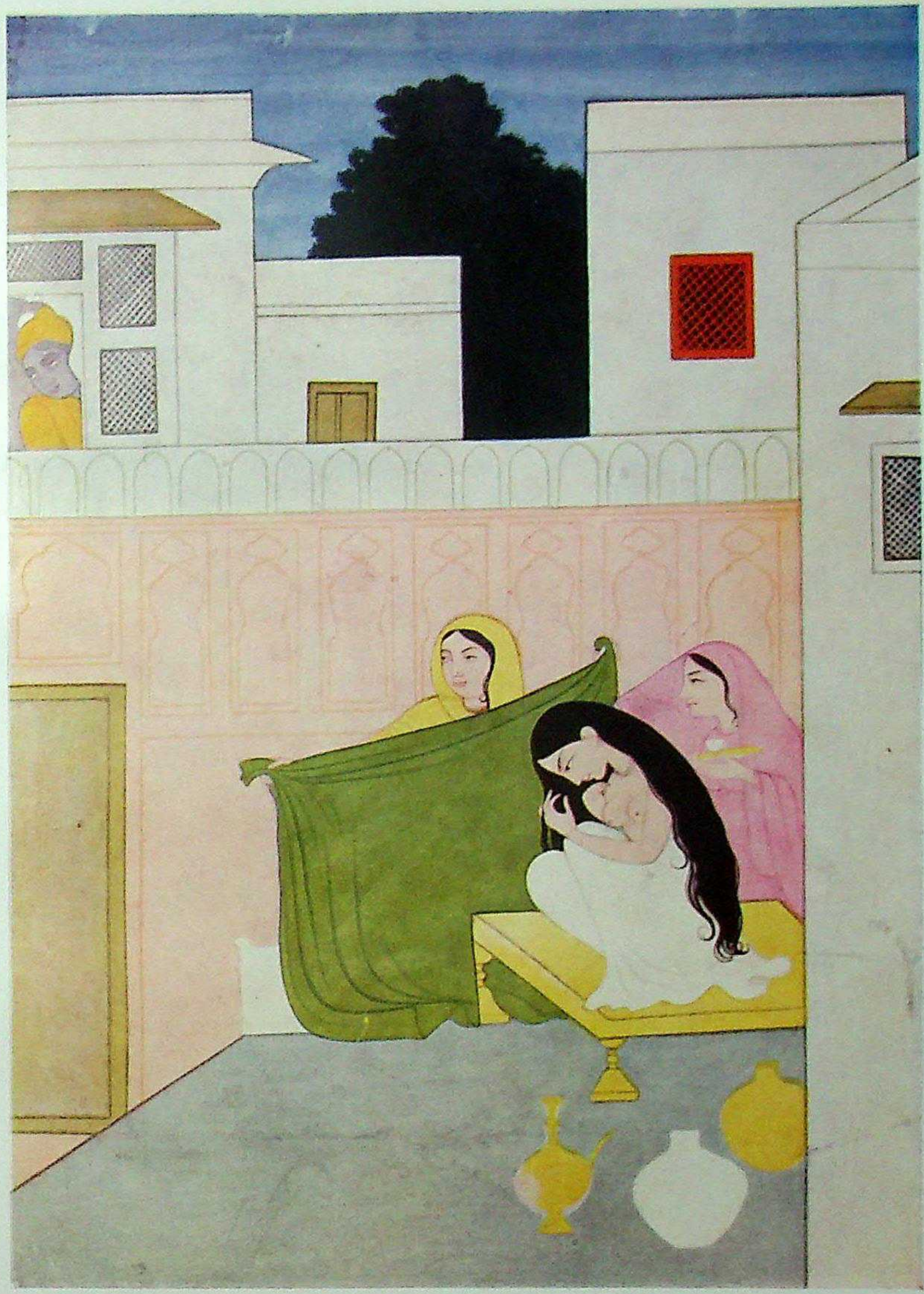


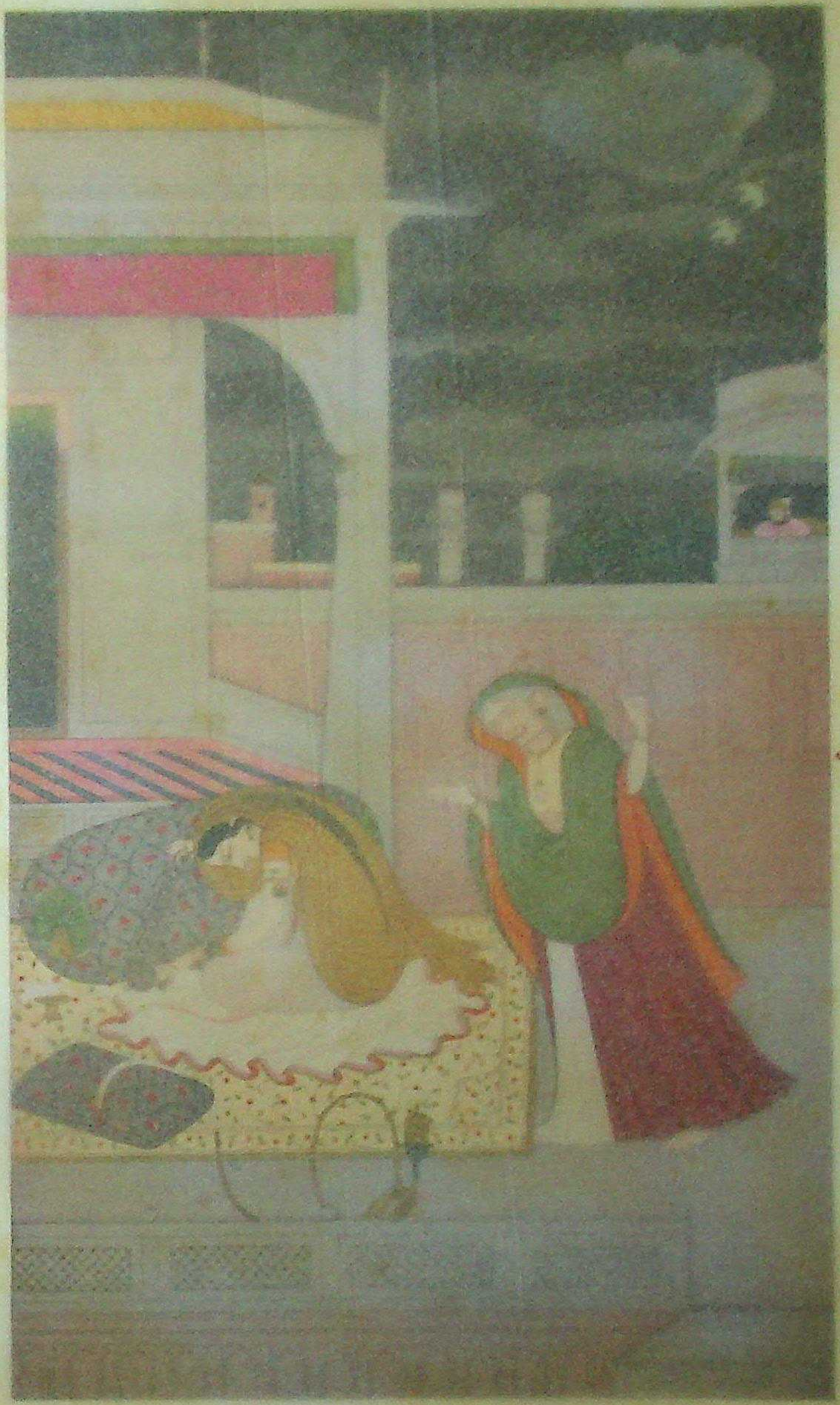
11. To the Tryst by Moonlight
(Raja of Lambagraon Collection)



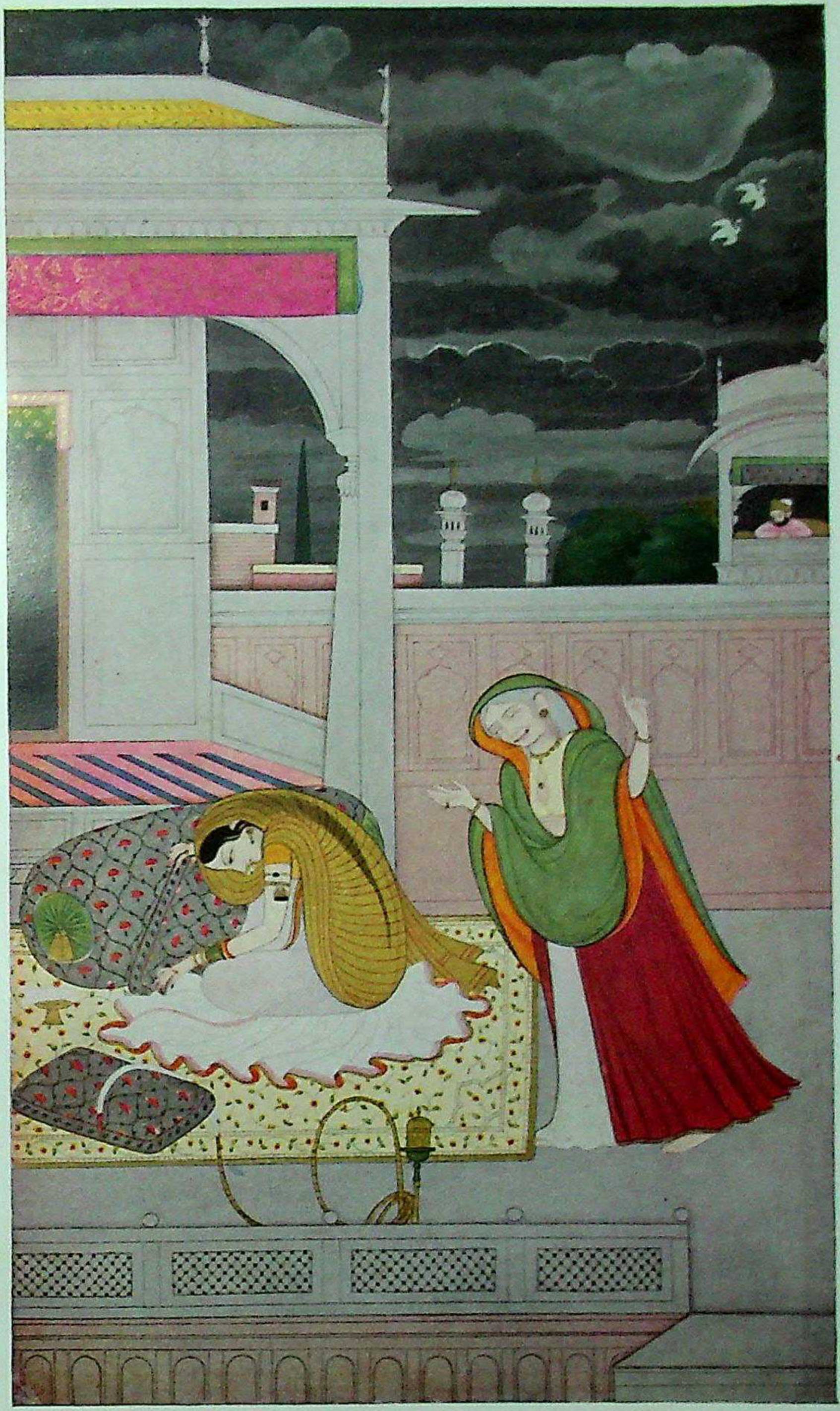


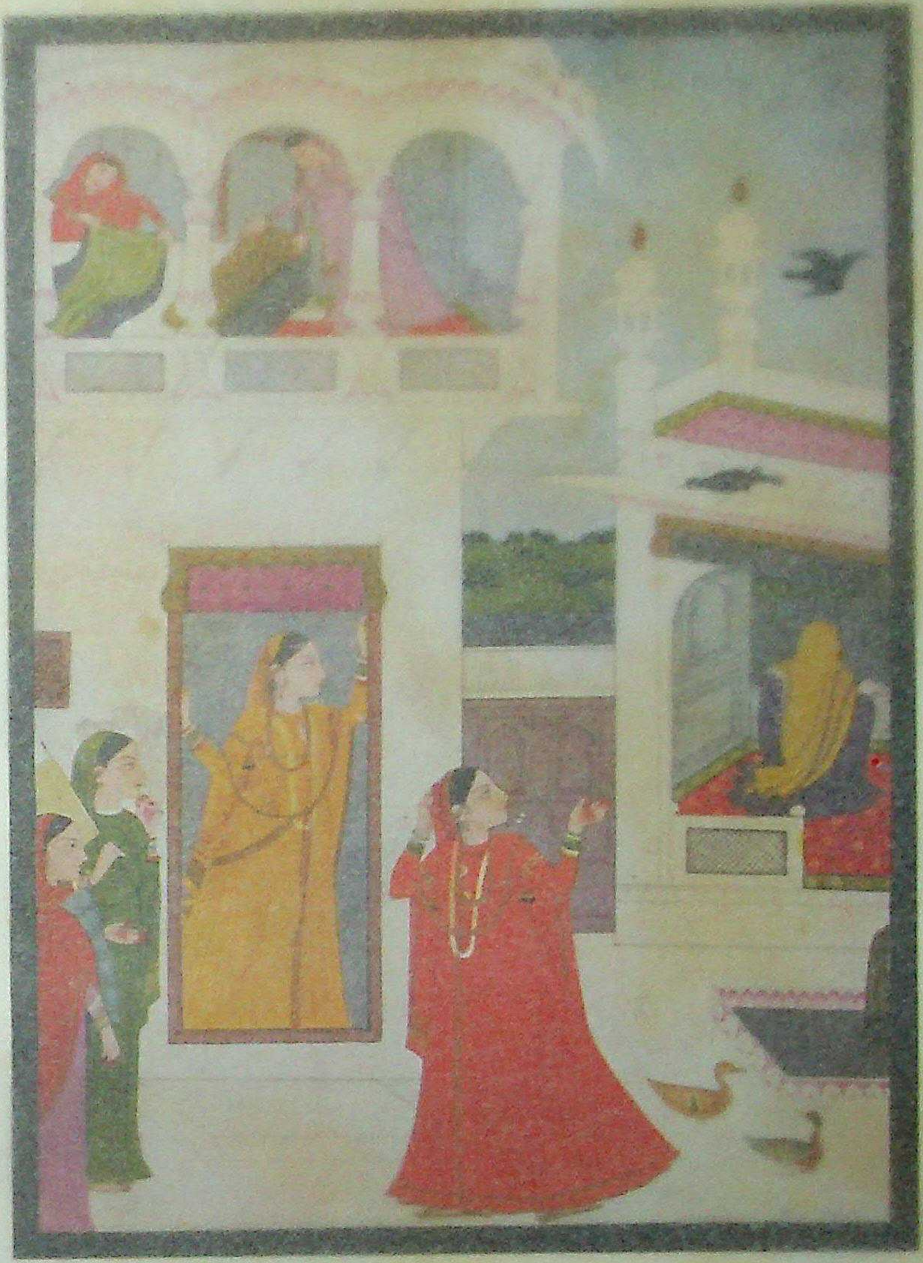
12. The Surprised Maiden
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)



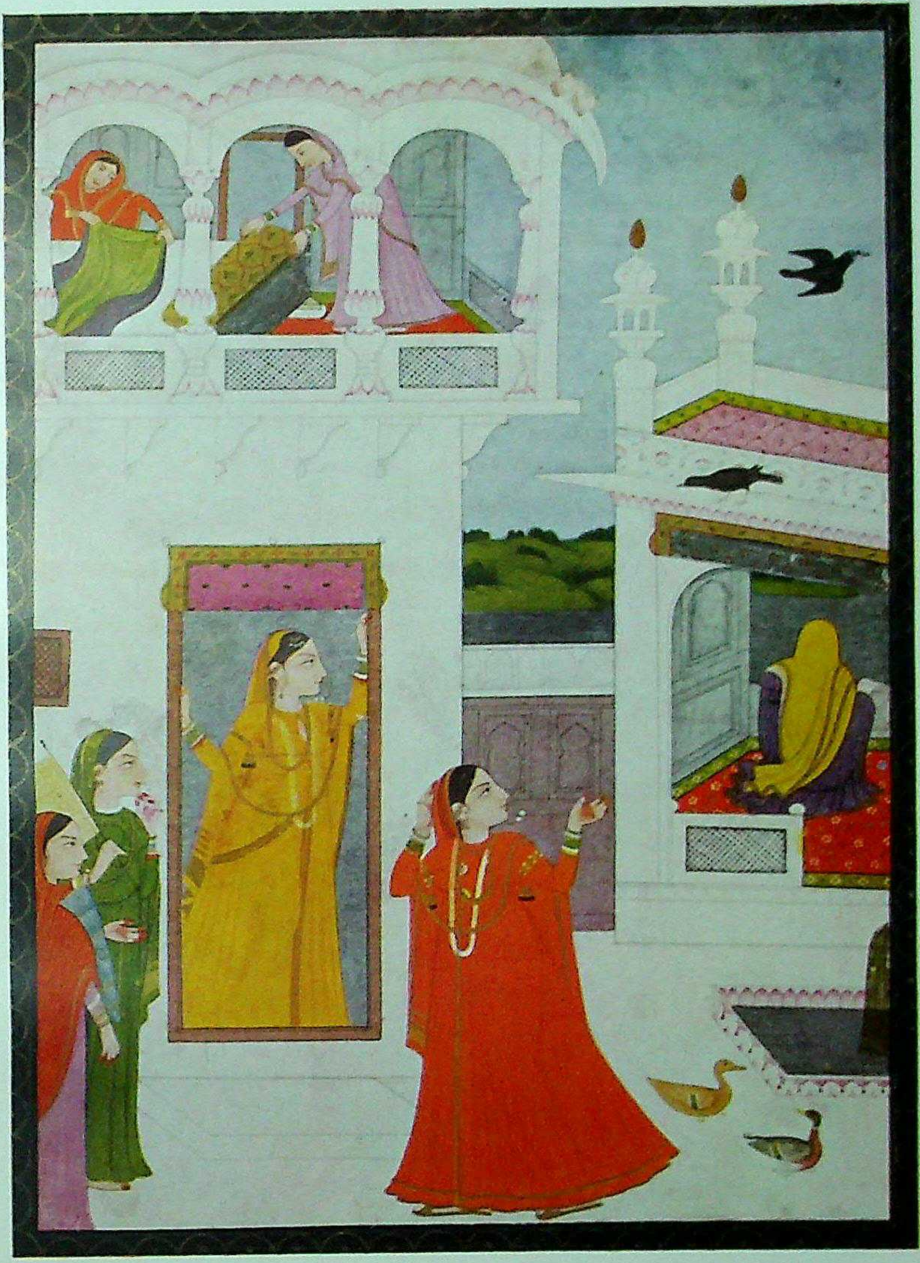


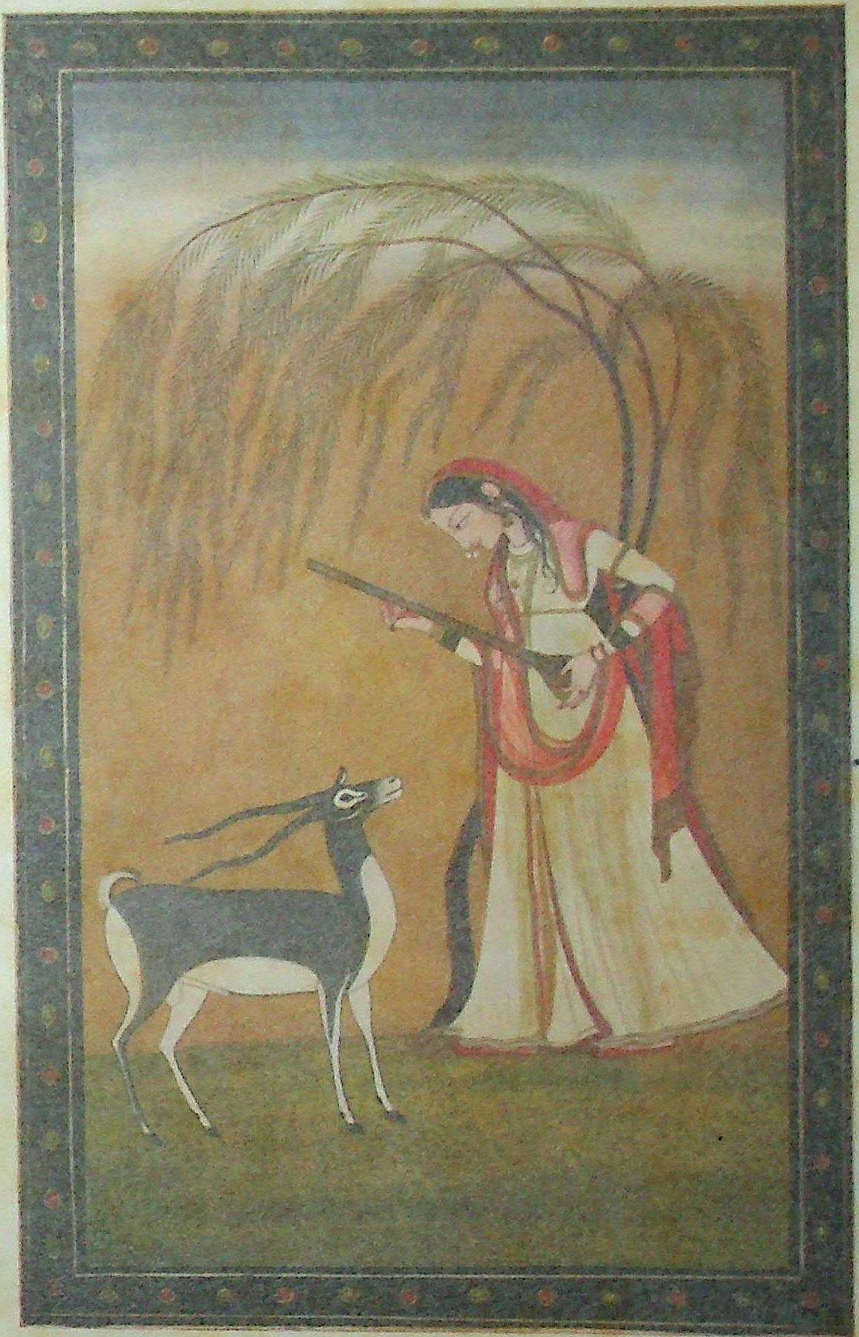
13. The Offended Lady
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)





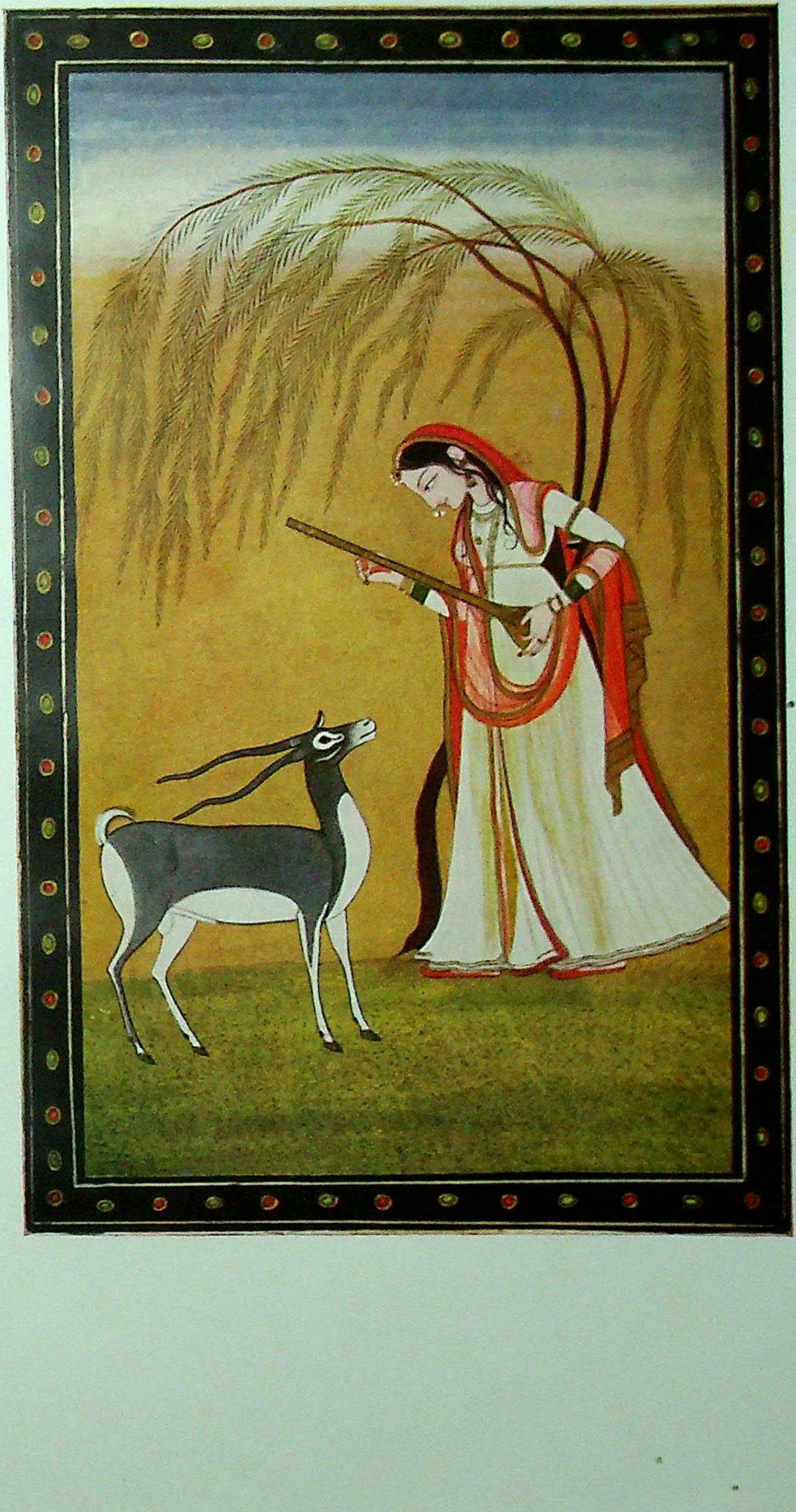
14. The Crow's Message
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)

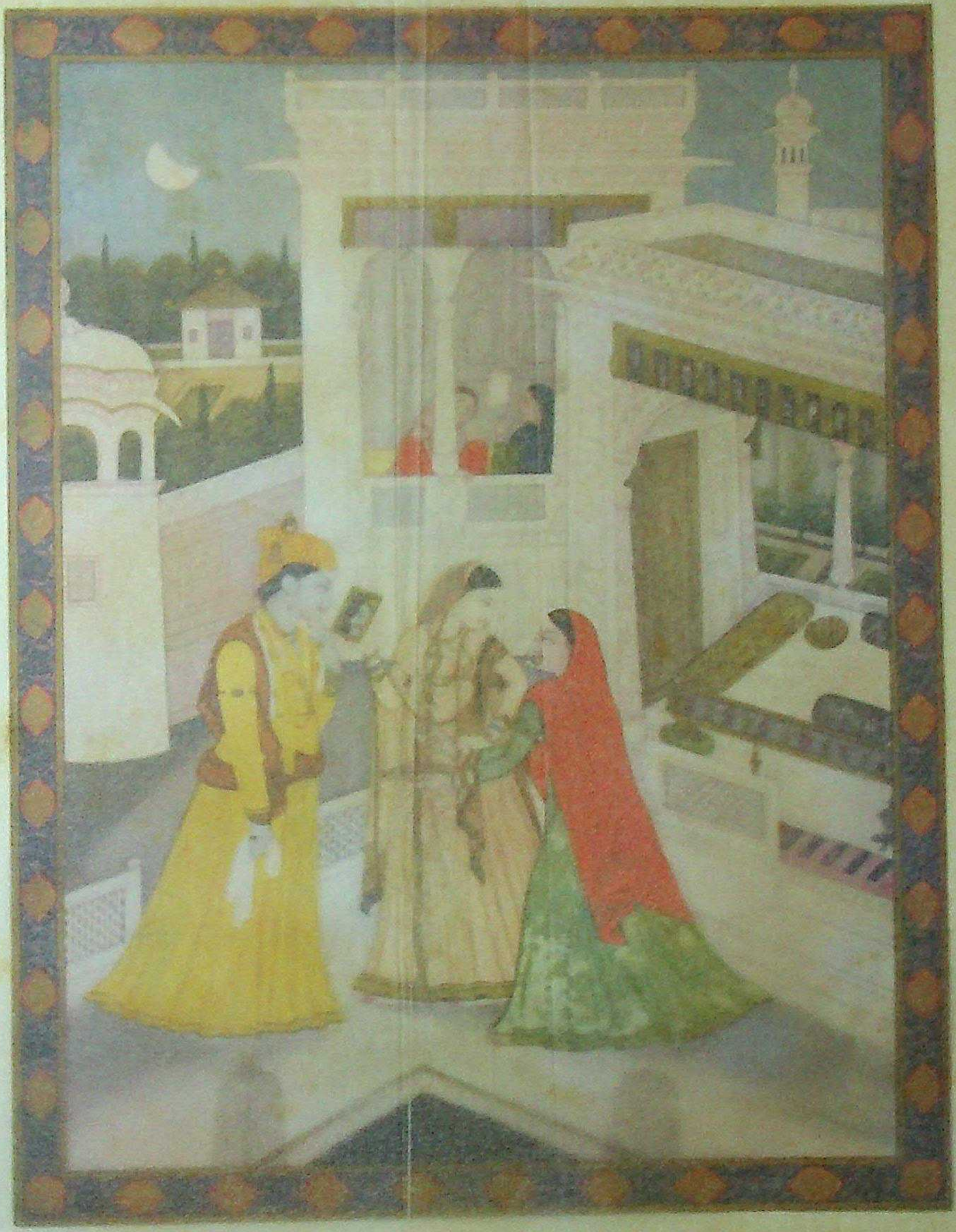




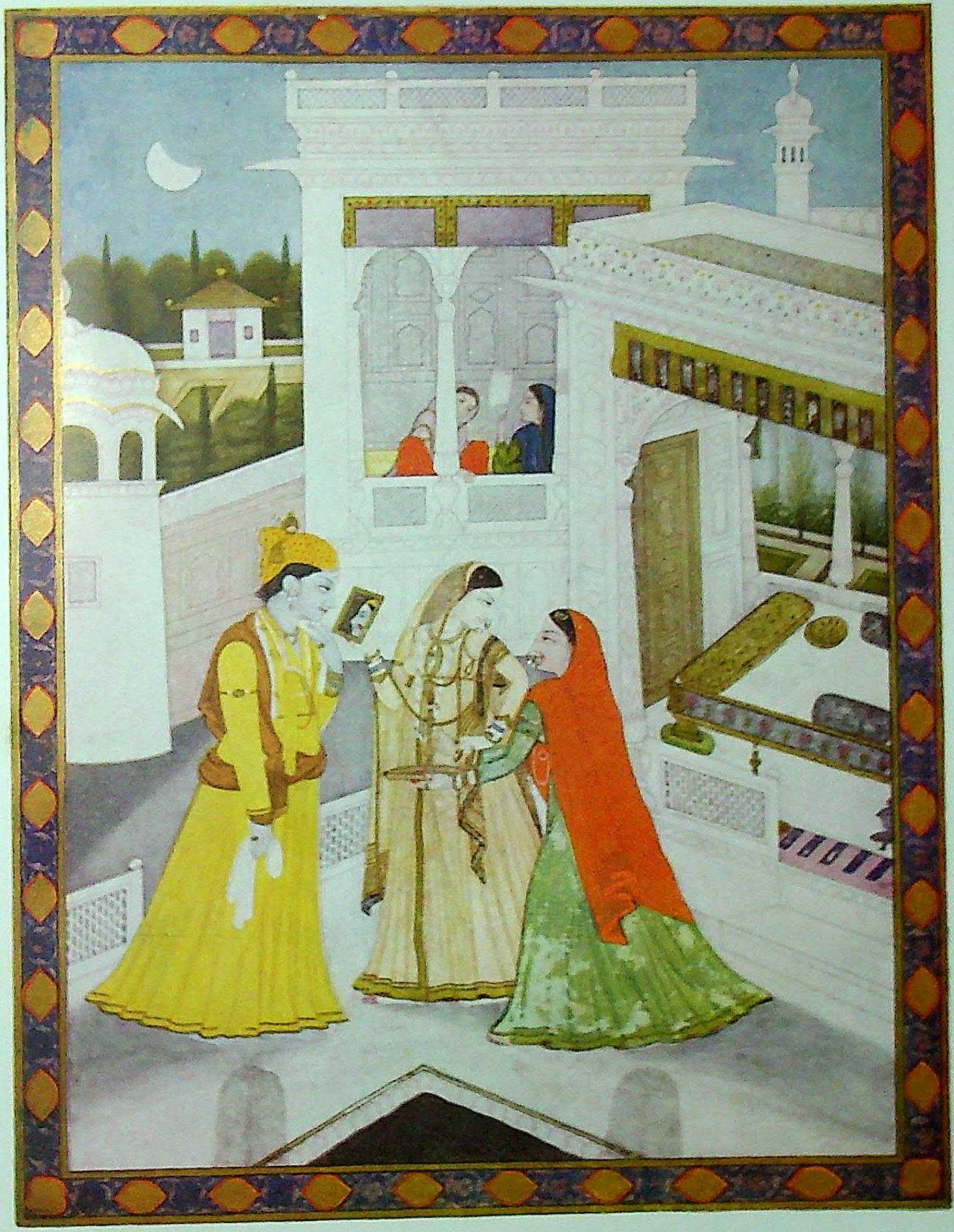
15. The Lament of Separation

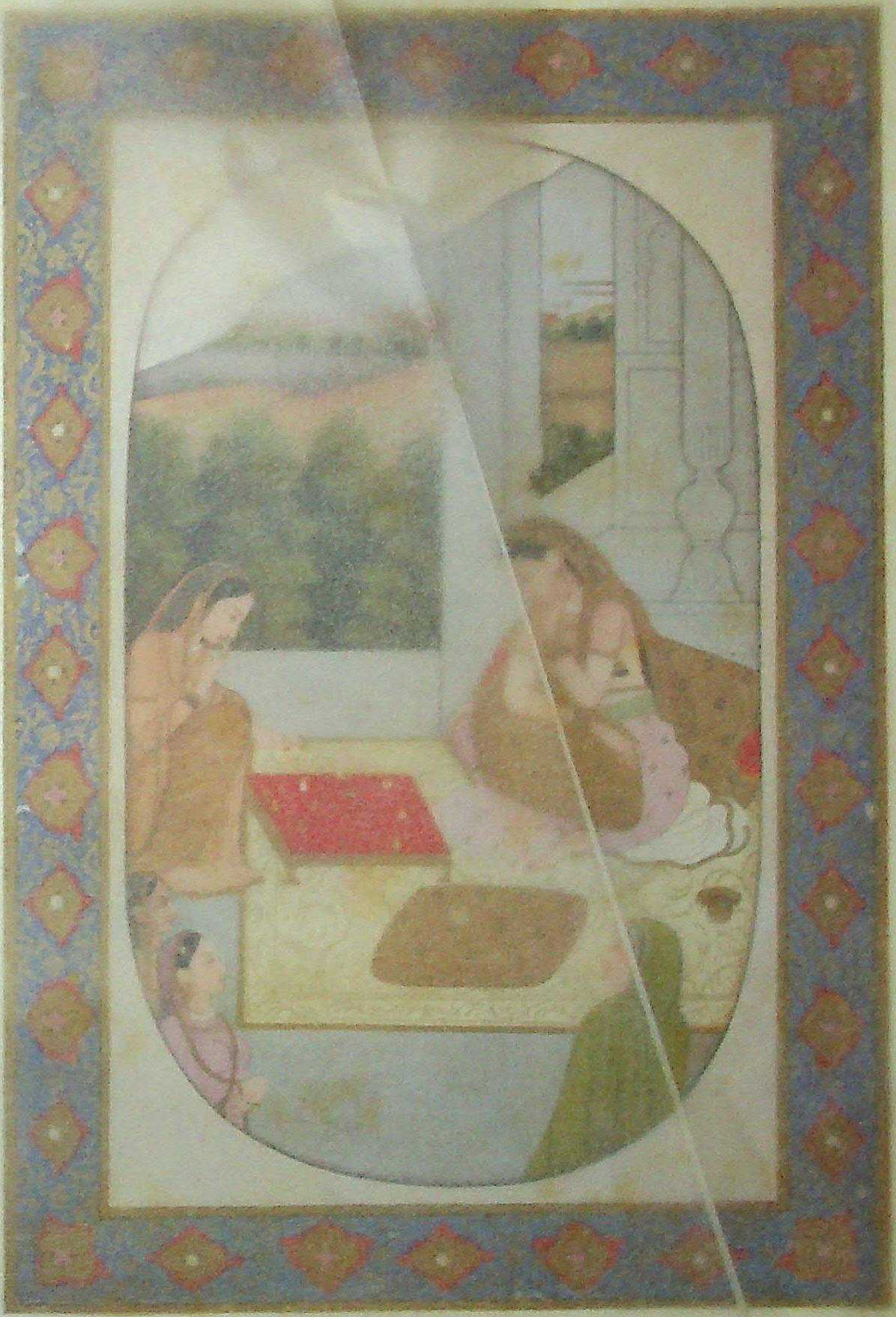
(Captain Sunder Singh Collection)





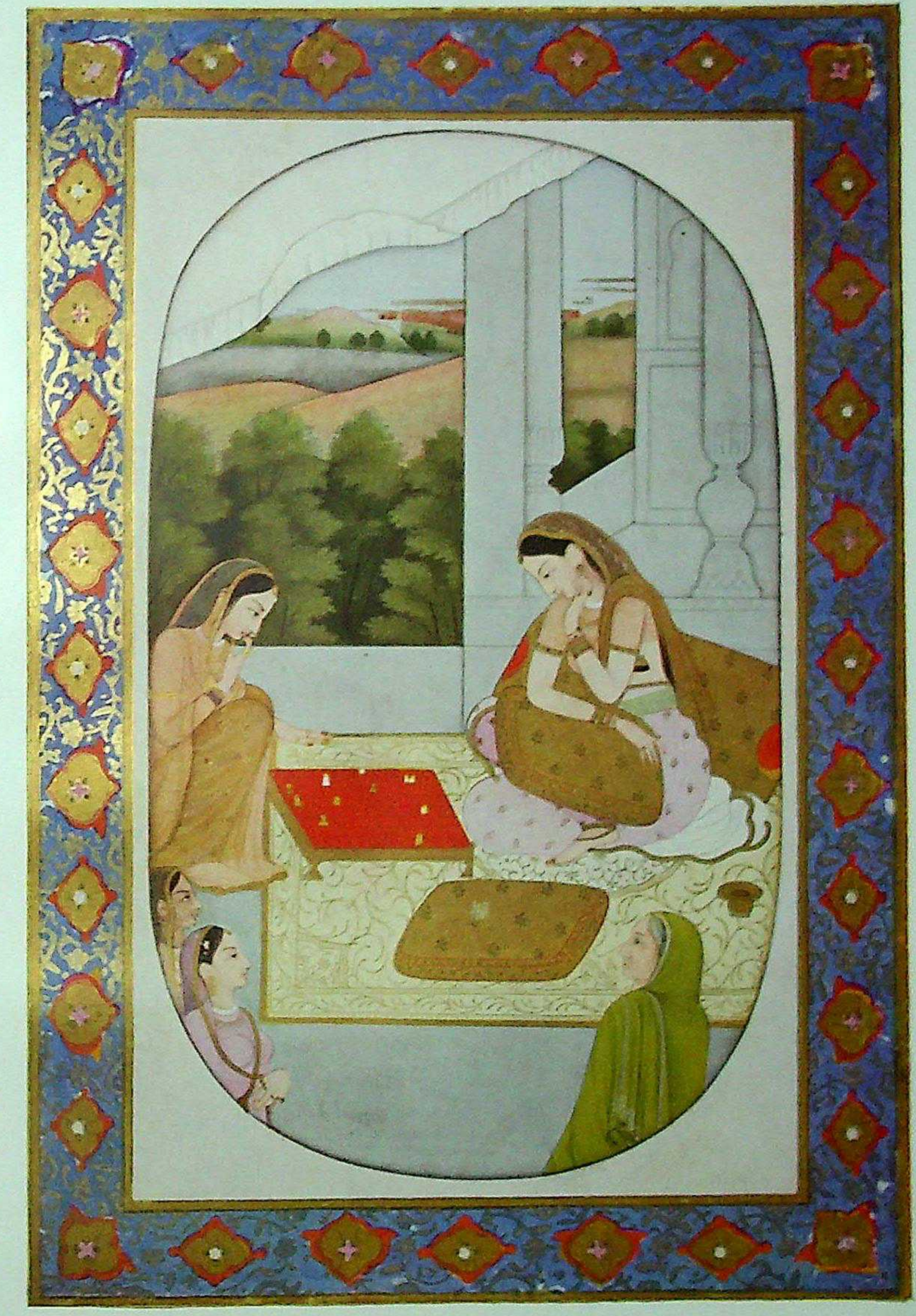
16. Ladyin Husband's Clothes
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)

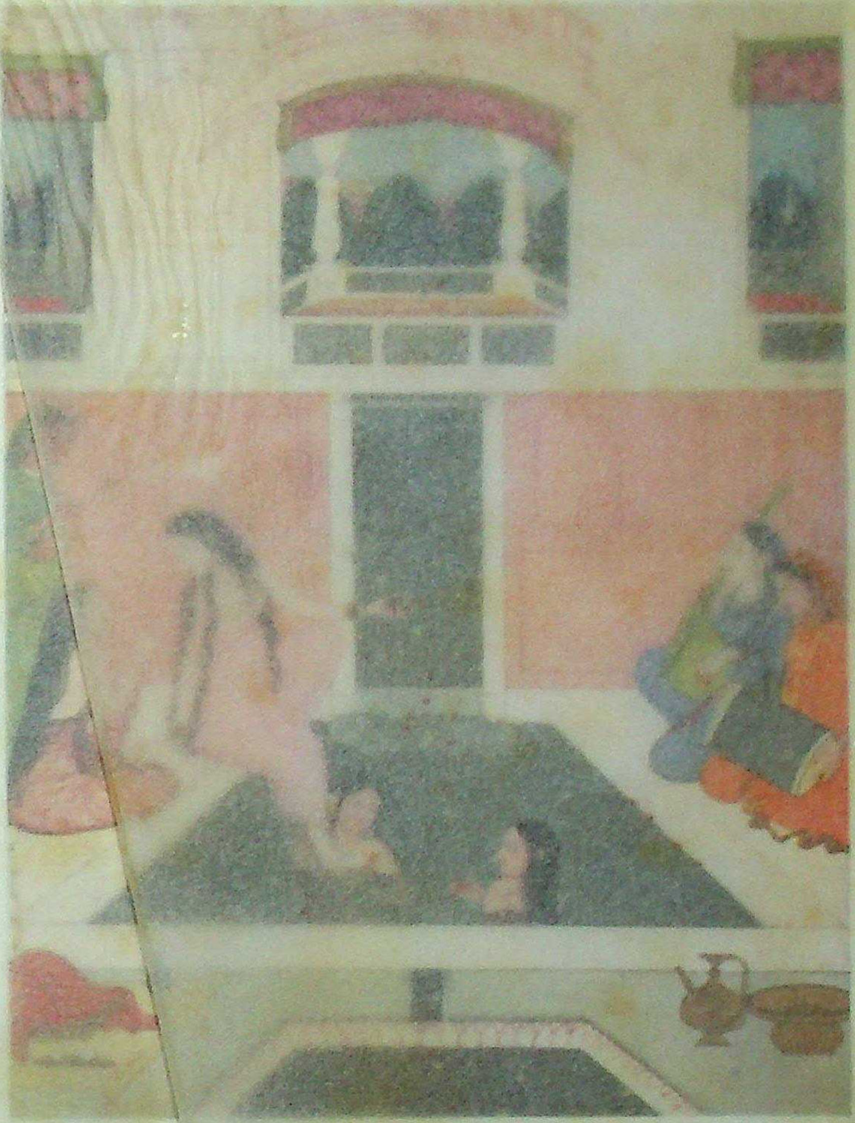




17. Ladies at Chess

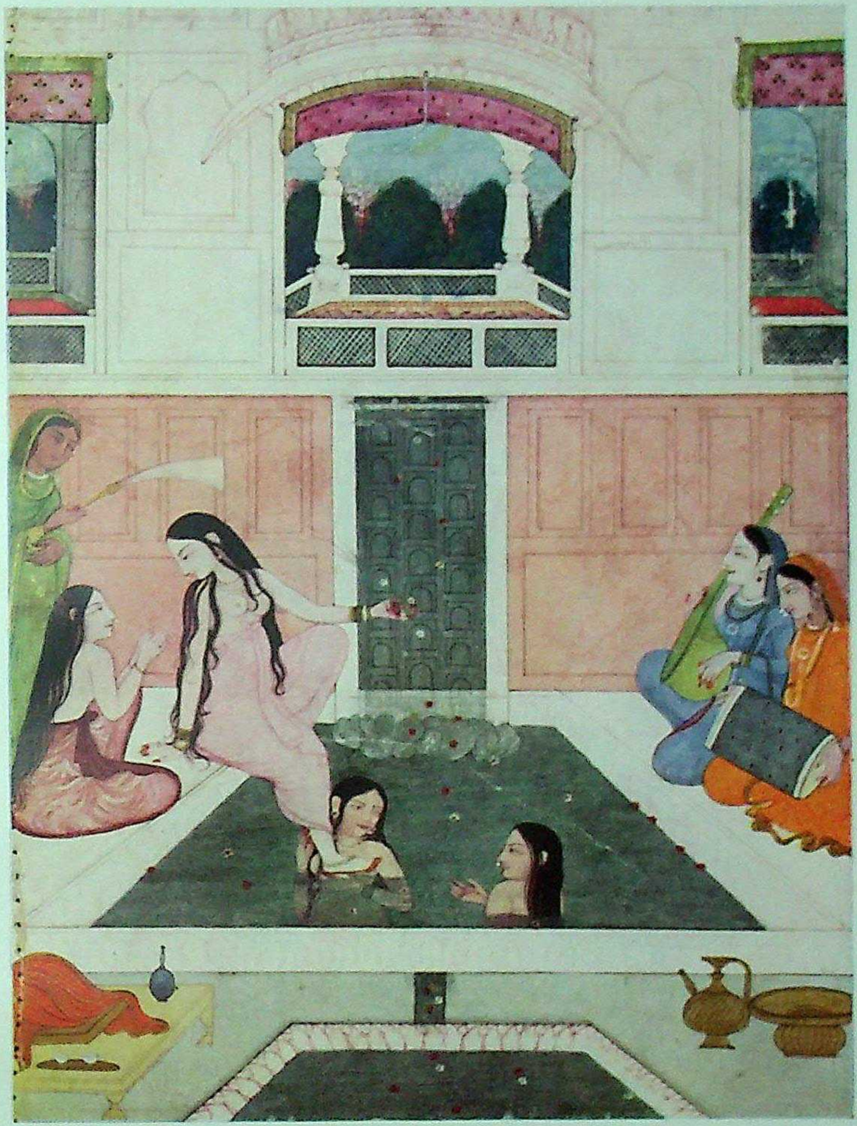
(*Mian Chattar Singh Collection*)

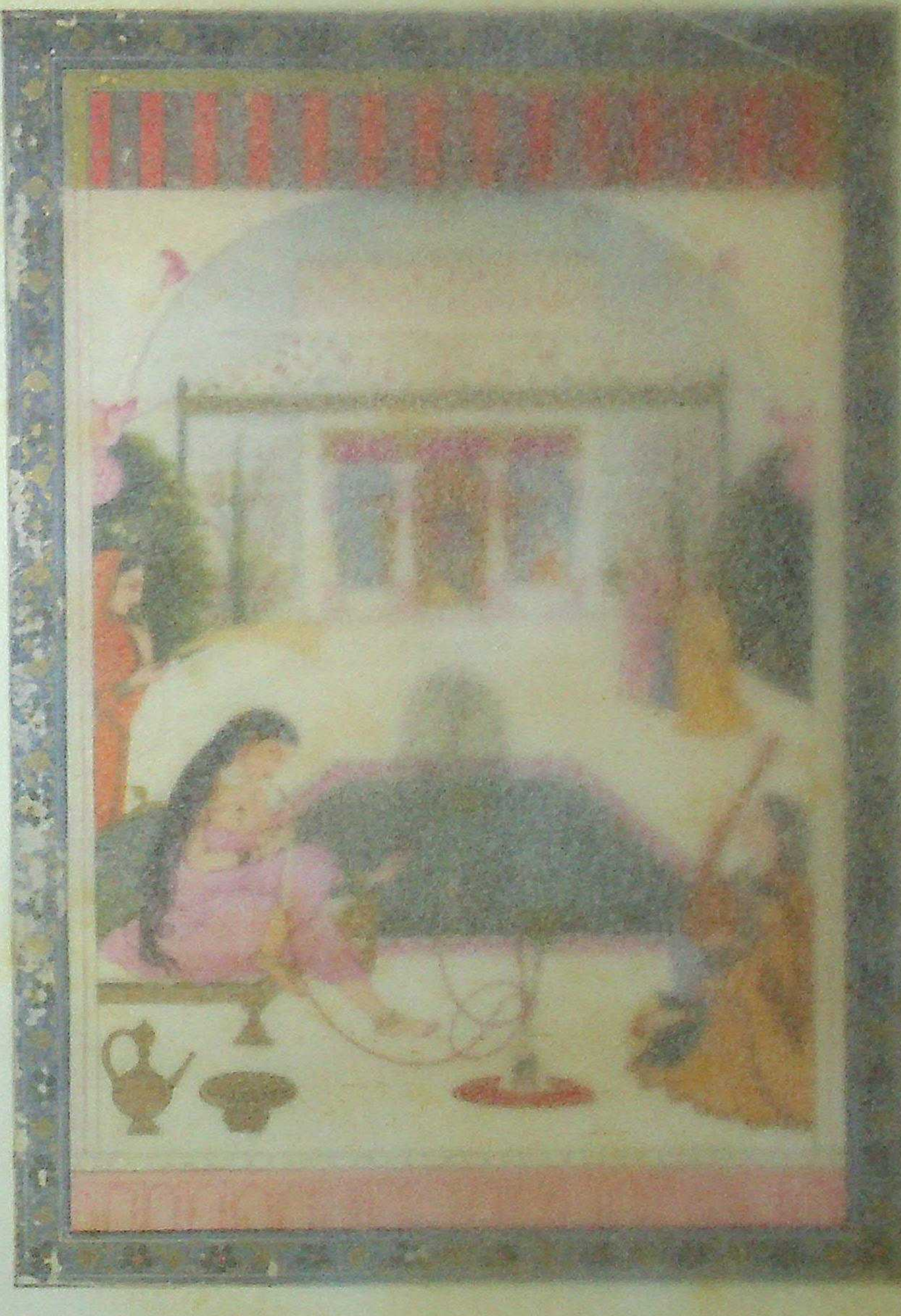




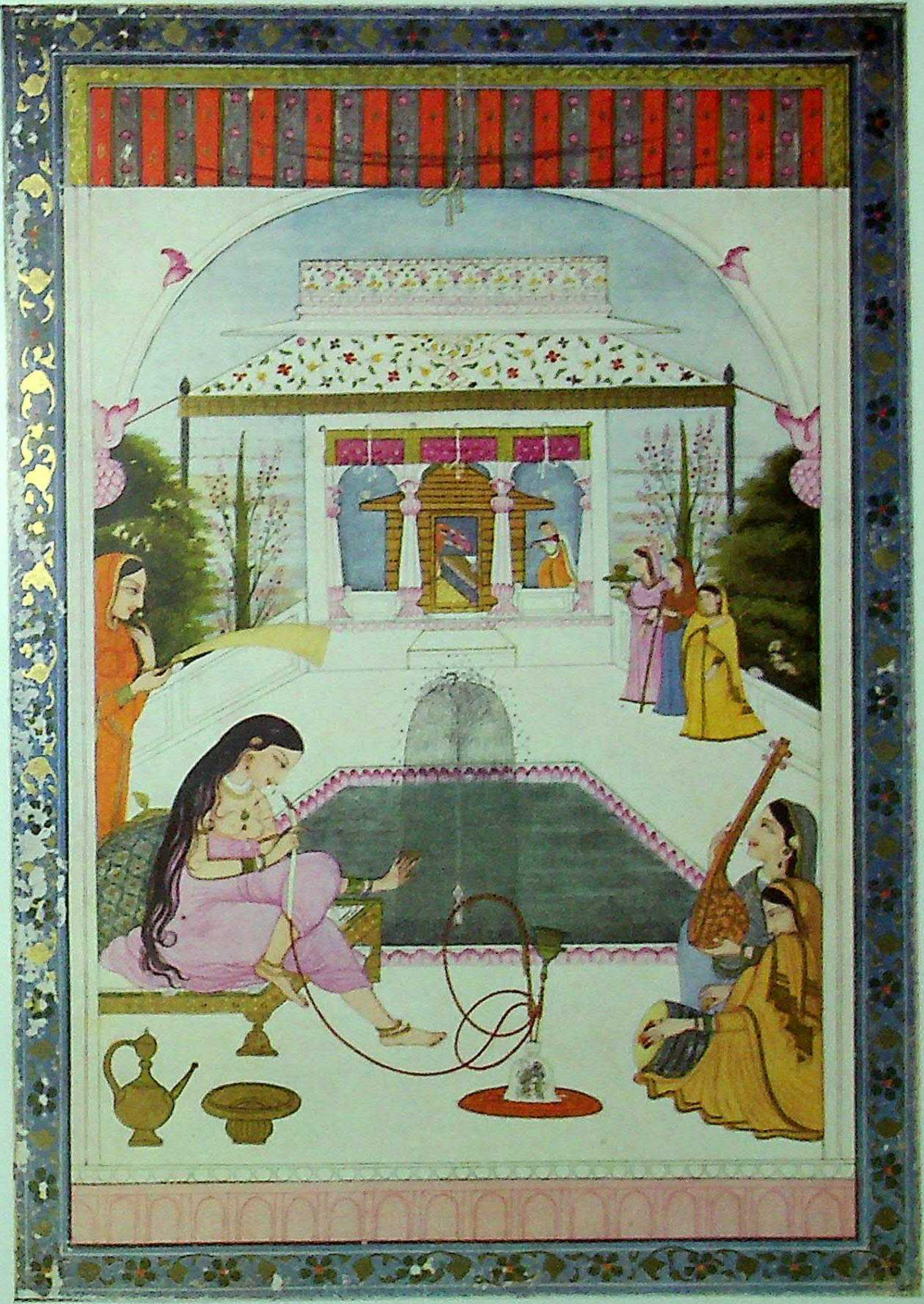
Bathing in Summer
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)

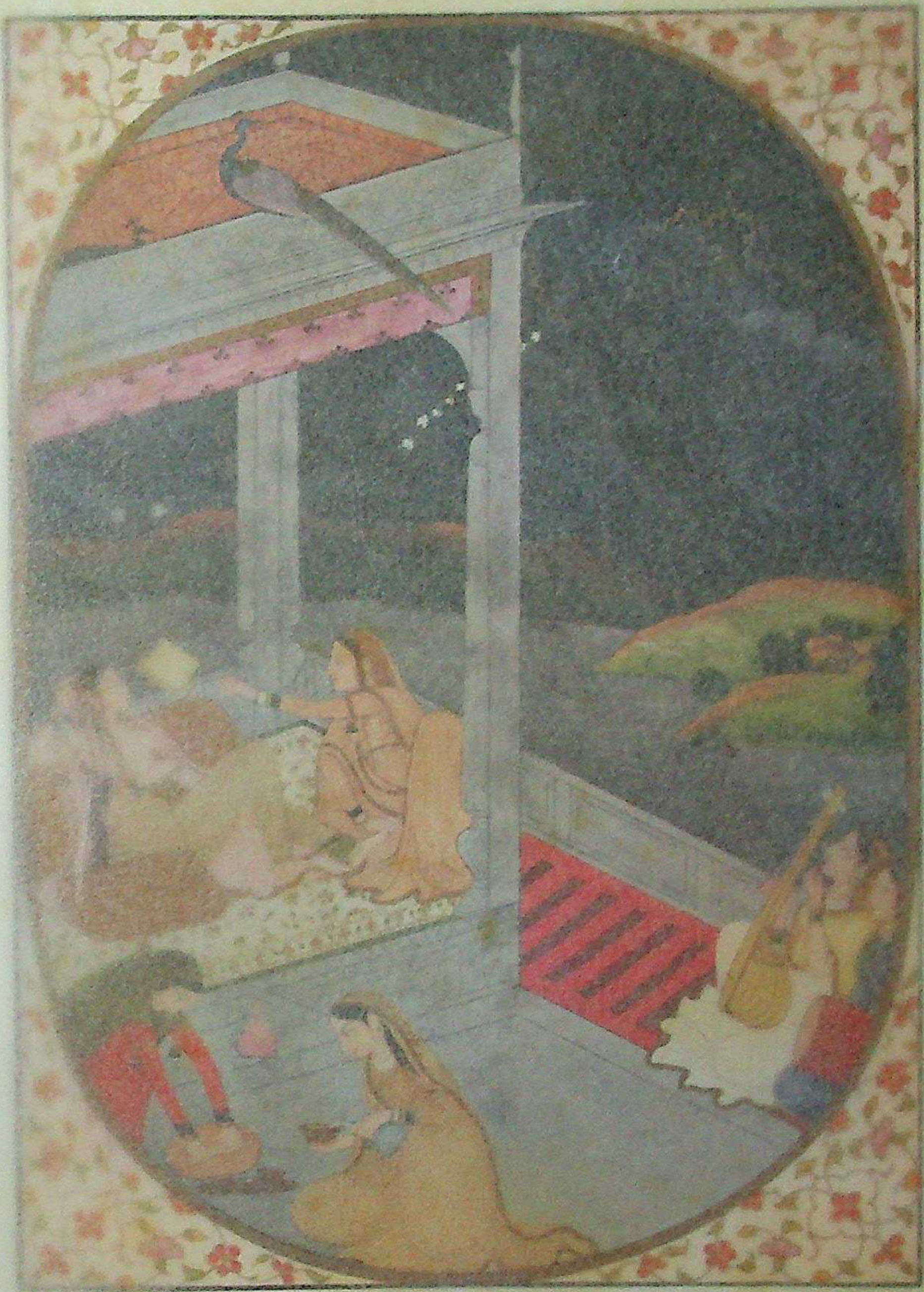
Gurukul K





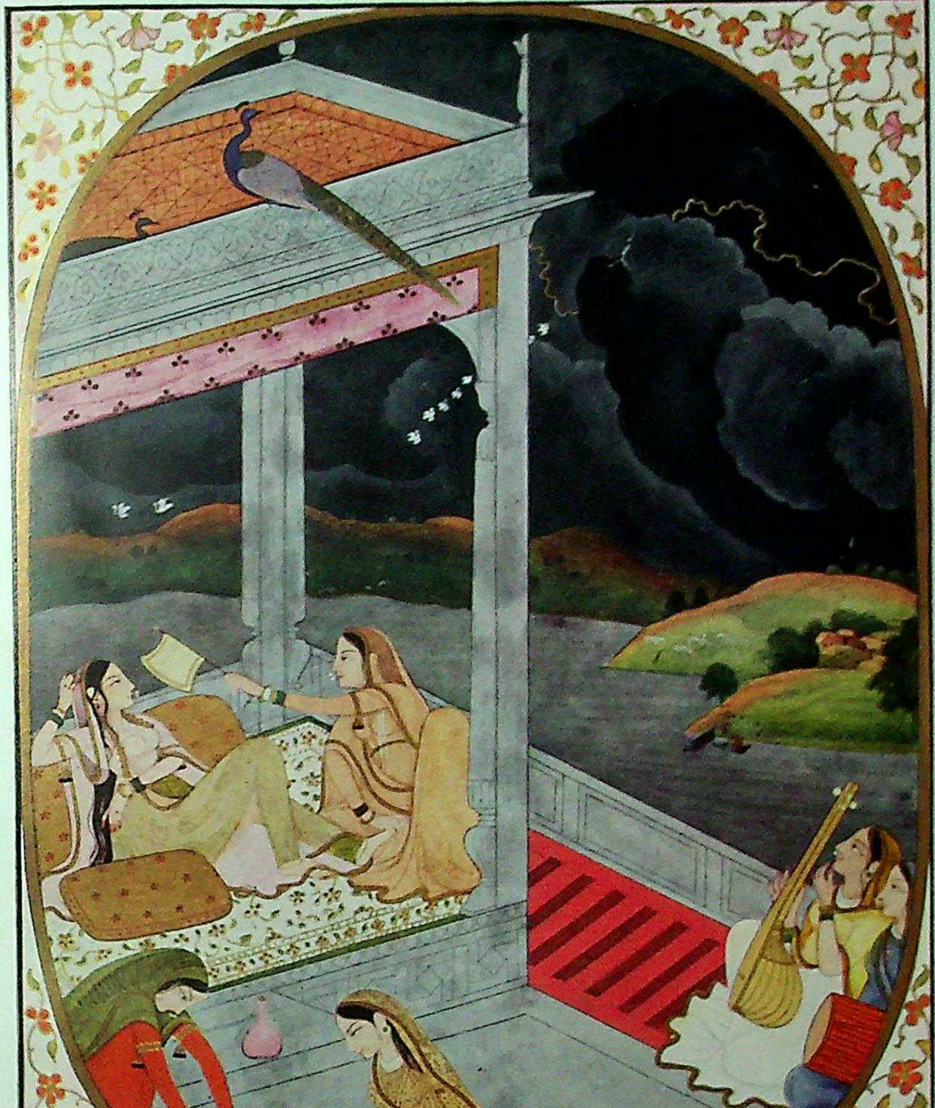
19. The Summer Pavilion
(*Captain Sunder Singh Collection*)





20. The Lovelorn Lady

(Punjab Museum Collection)



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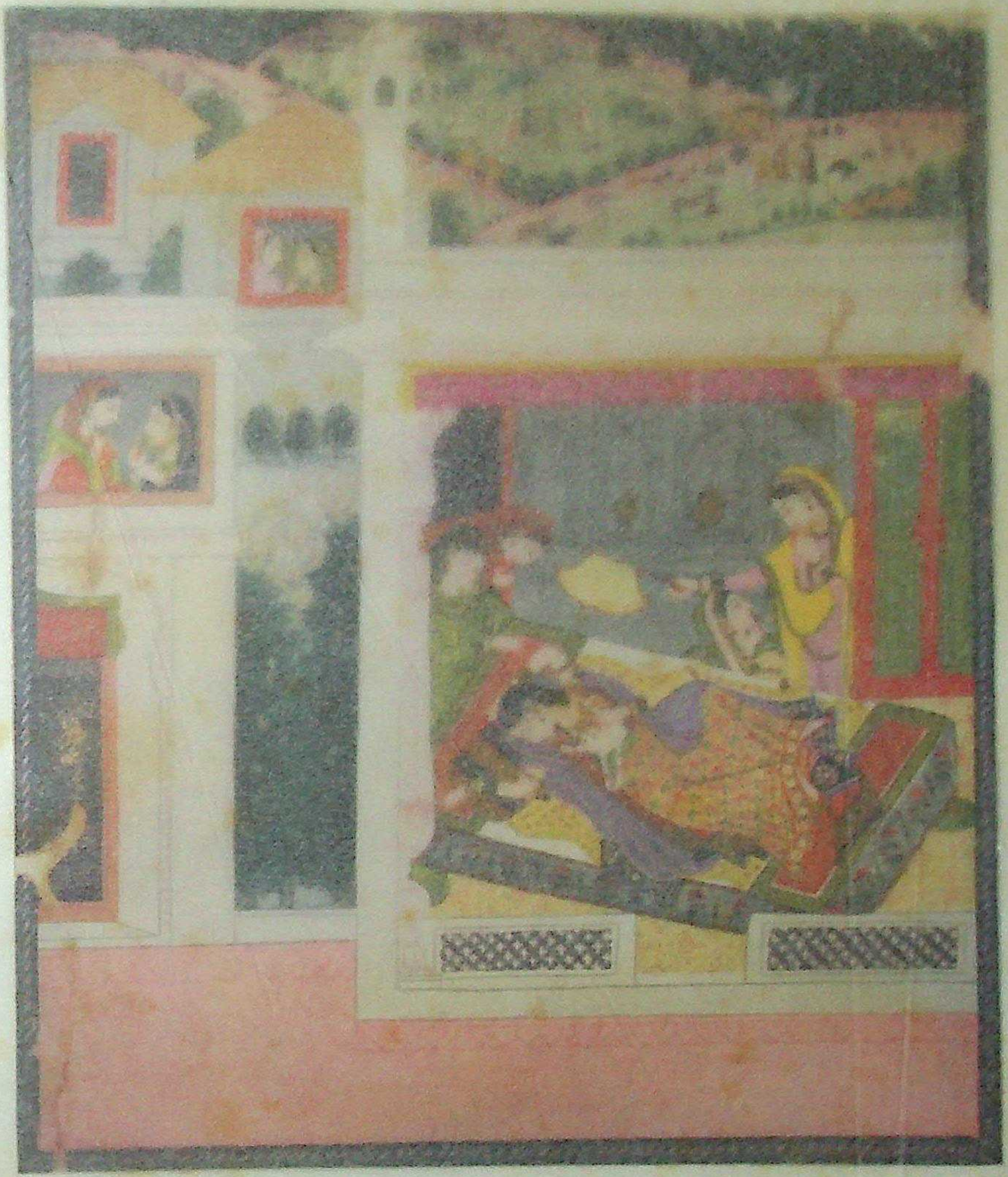
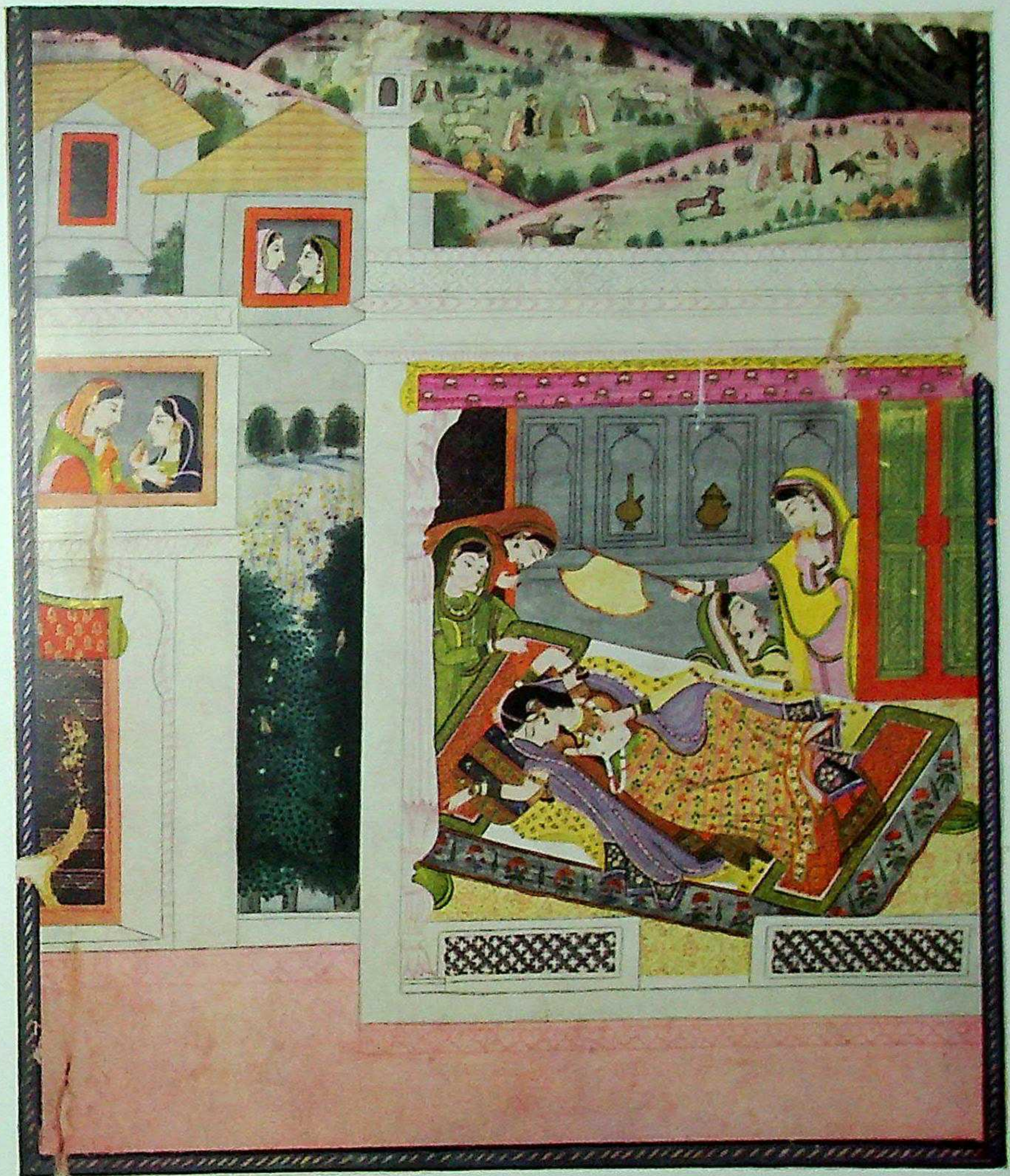
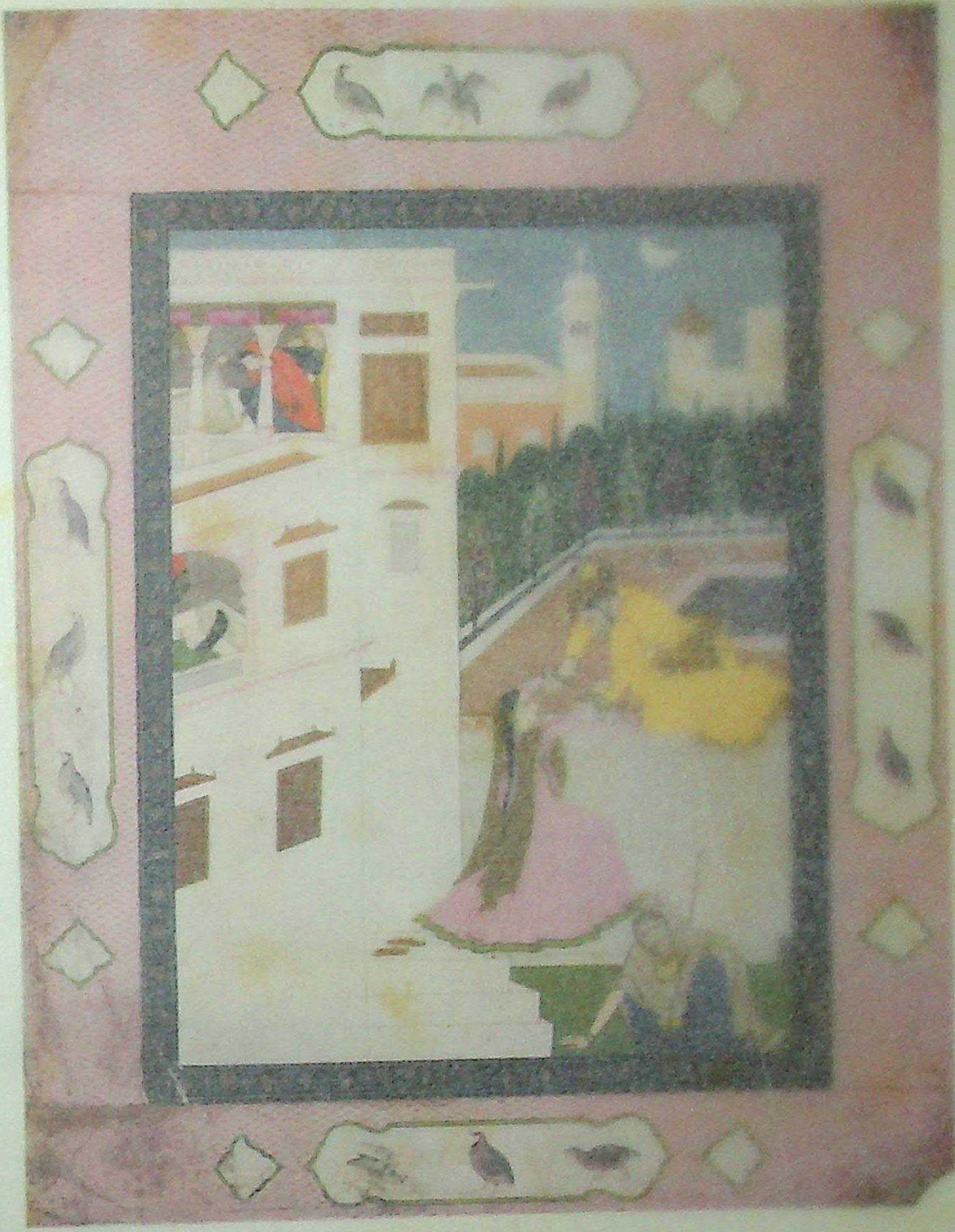
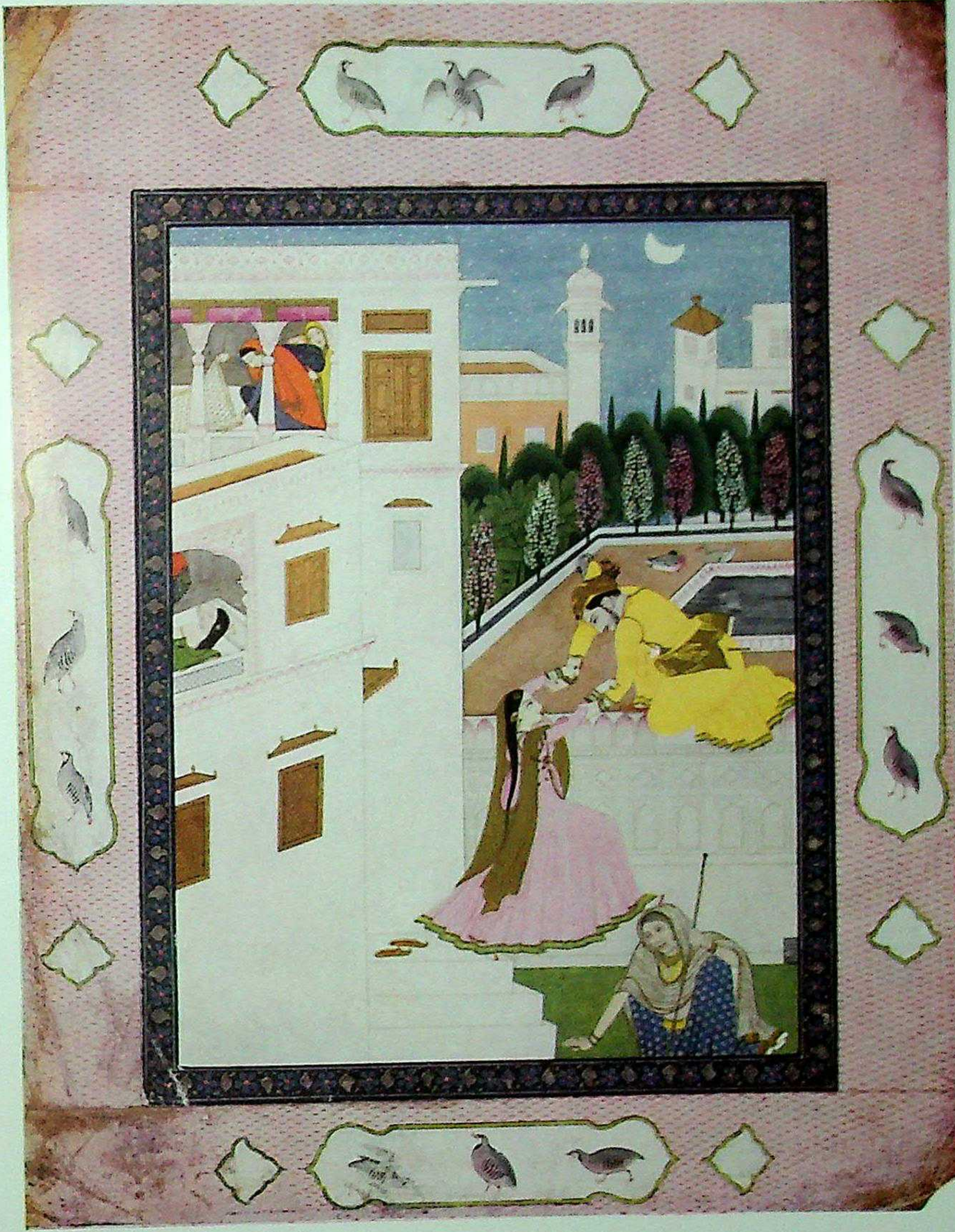


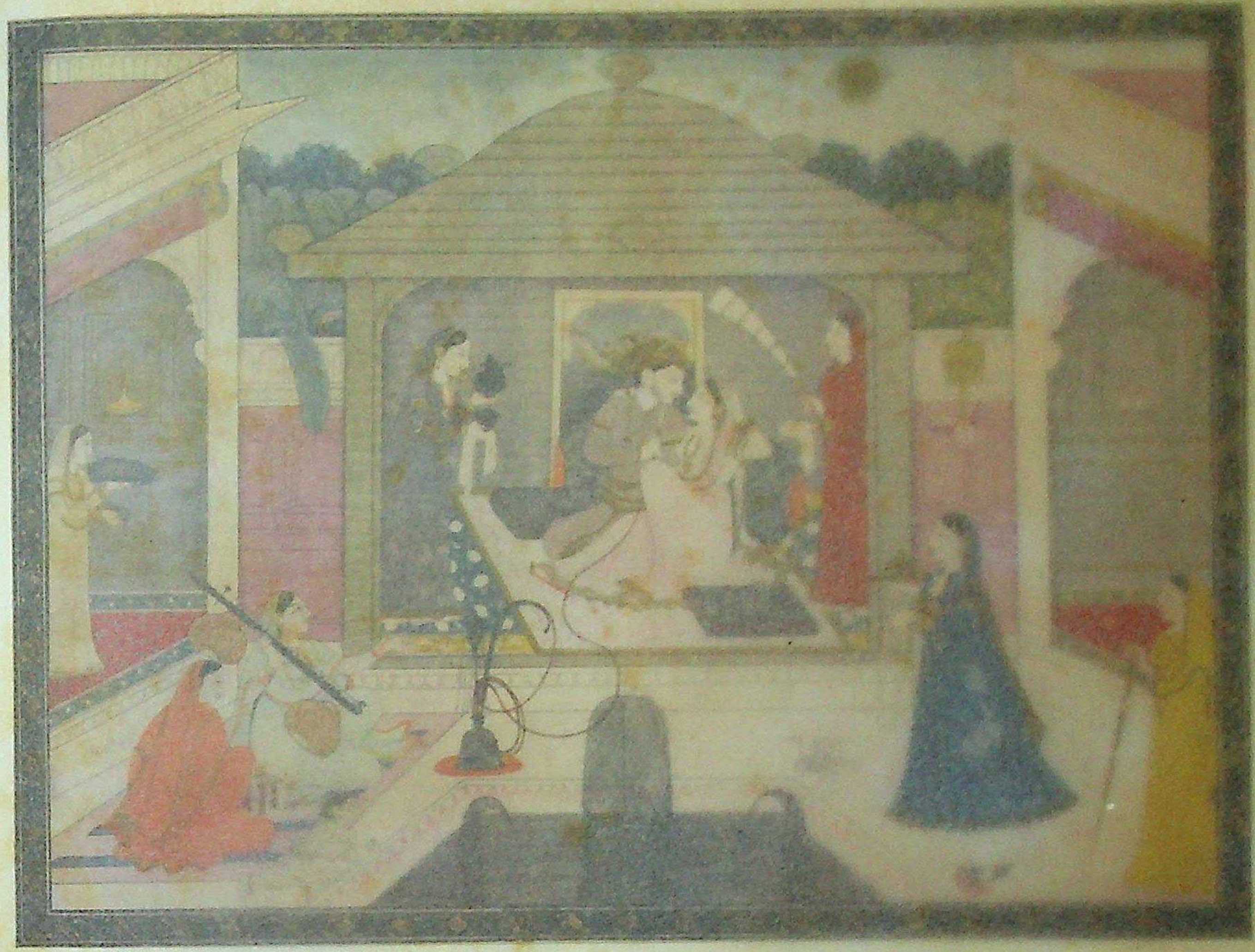
21. Love's Burning Fever
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)





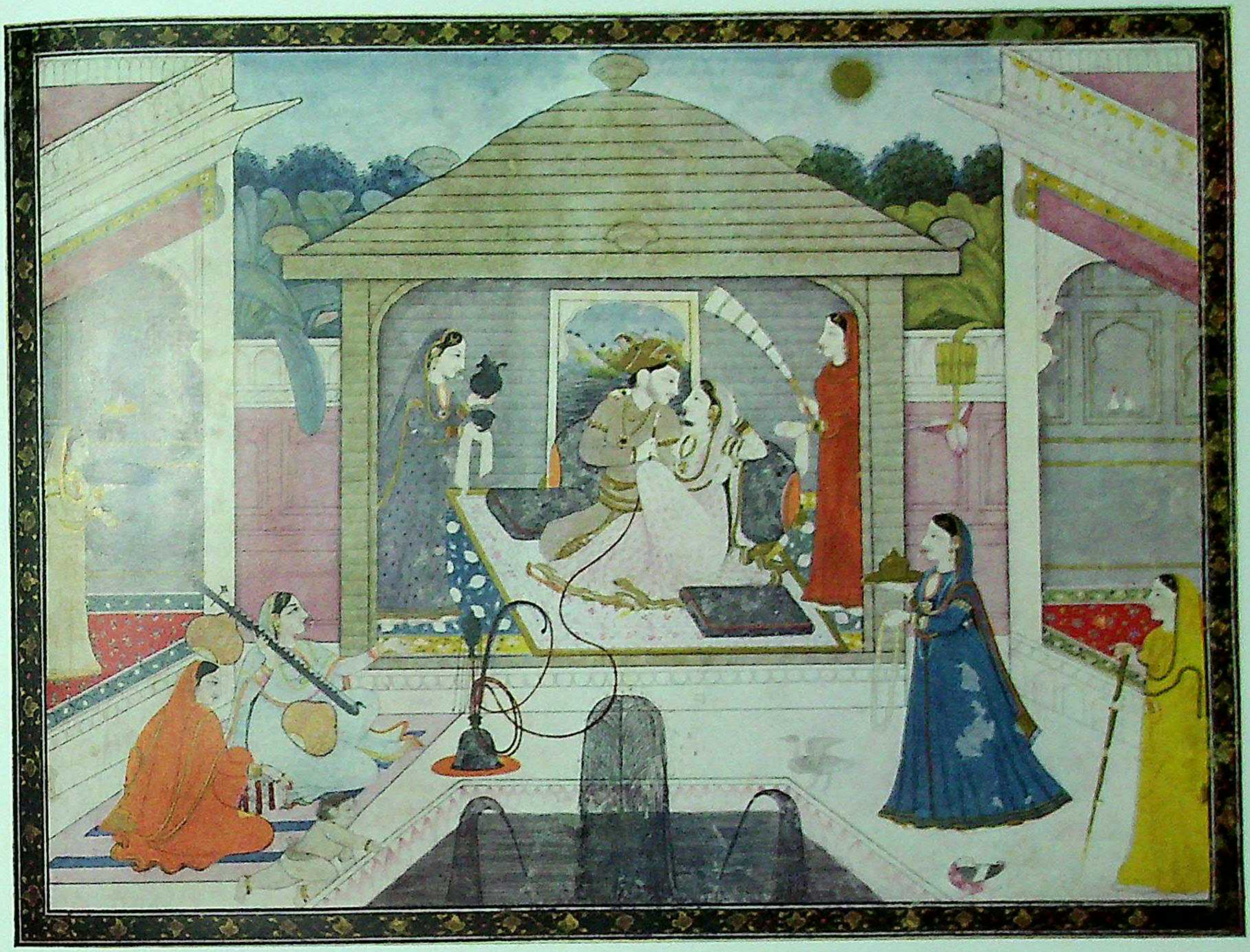
22. Scaling Garden Wall
(Captain Sunder Singh Collection)

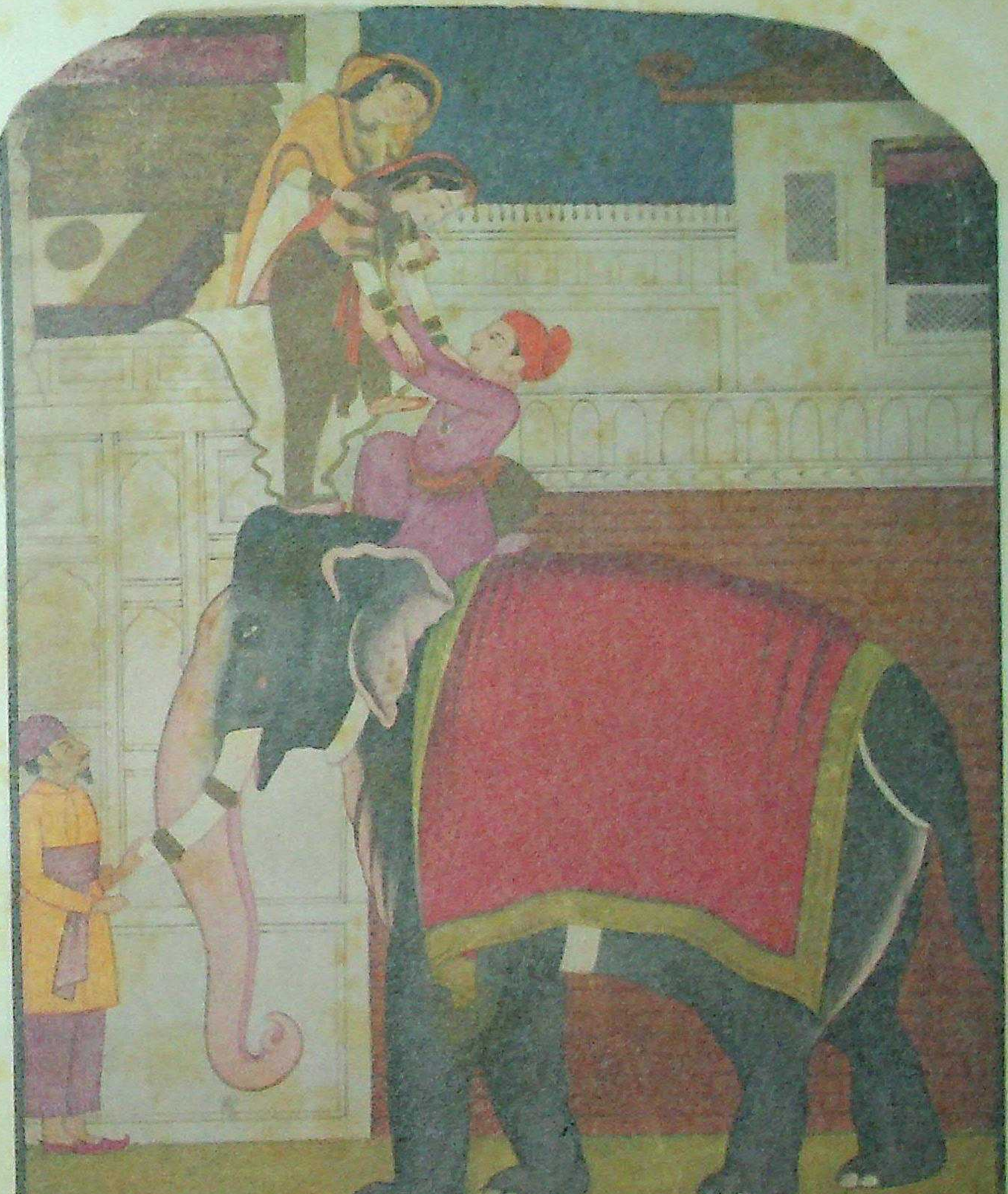




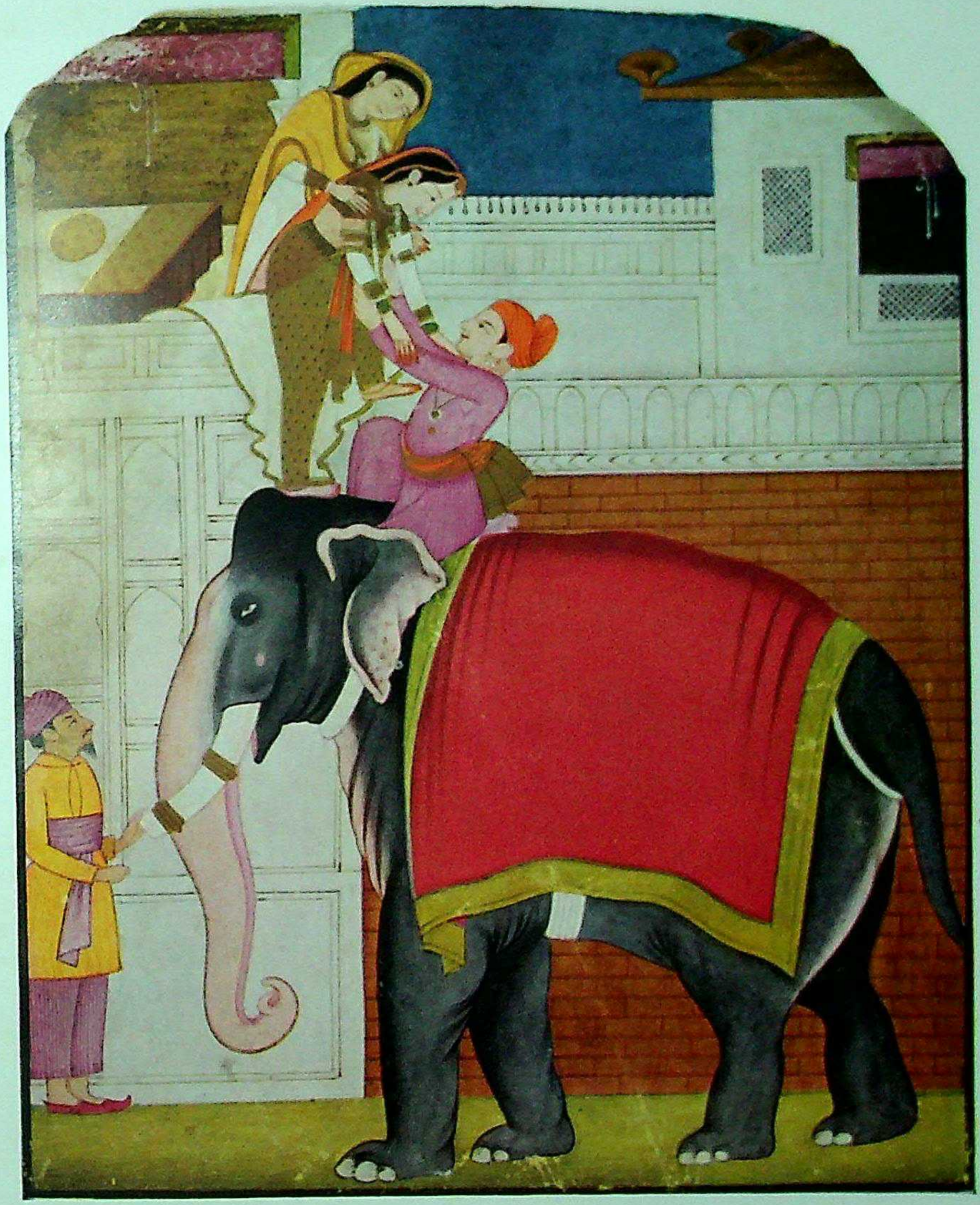
23. In the Pavilion

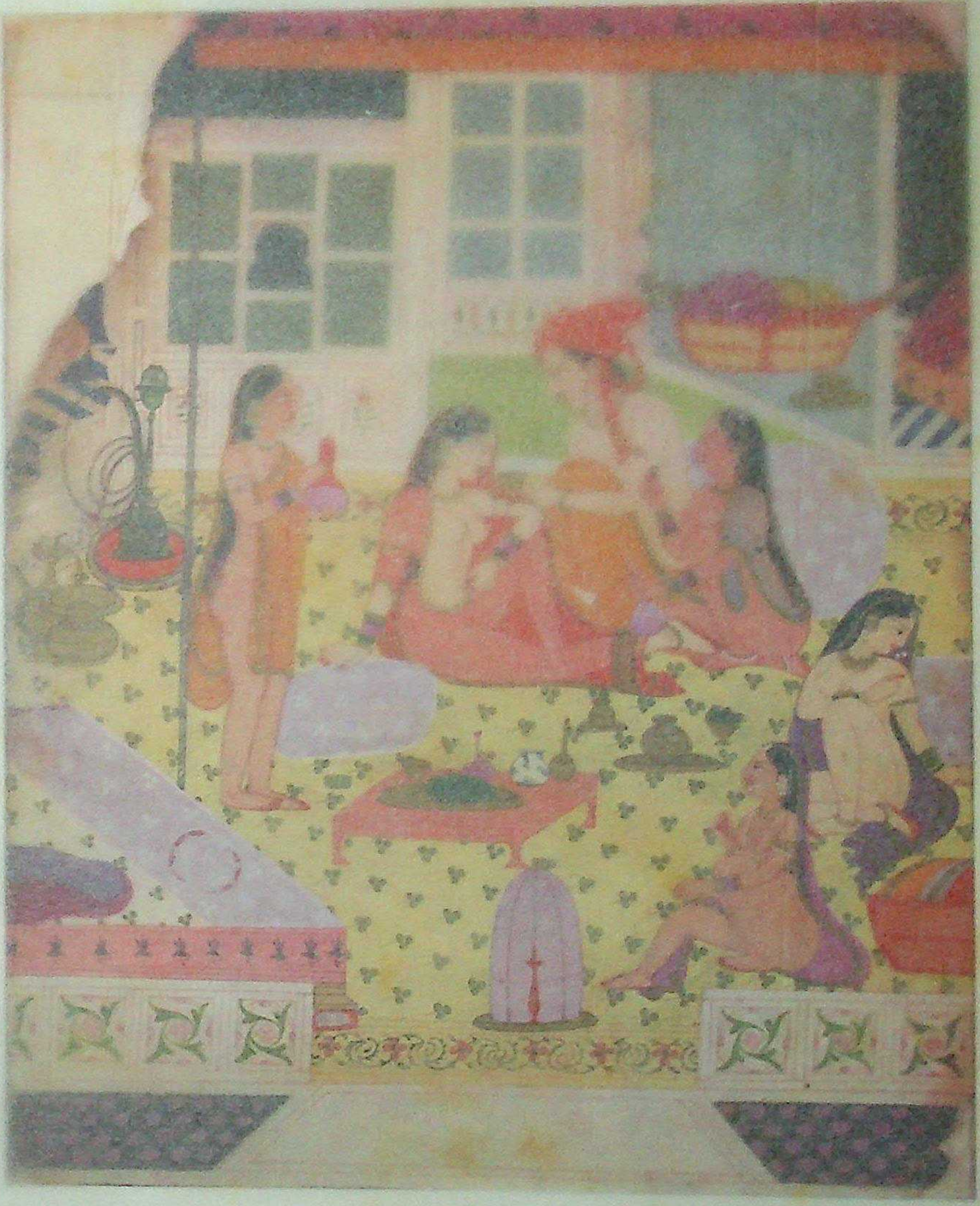
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)



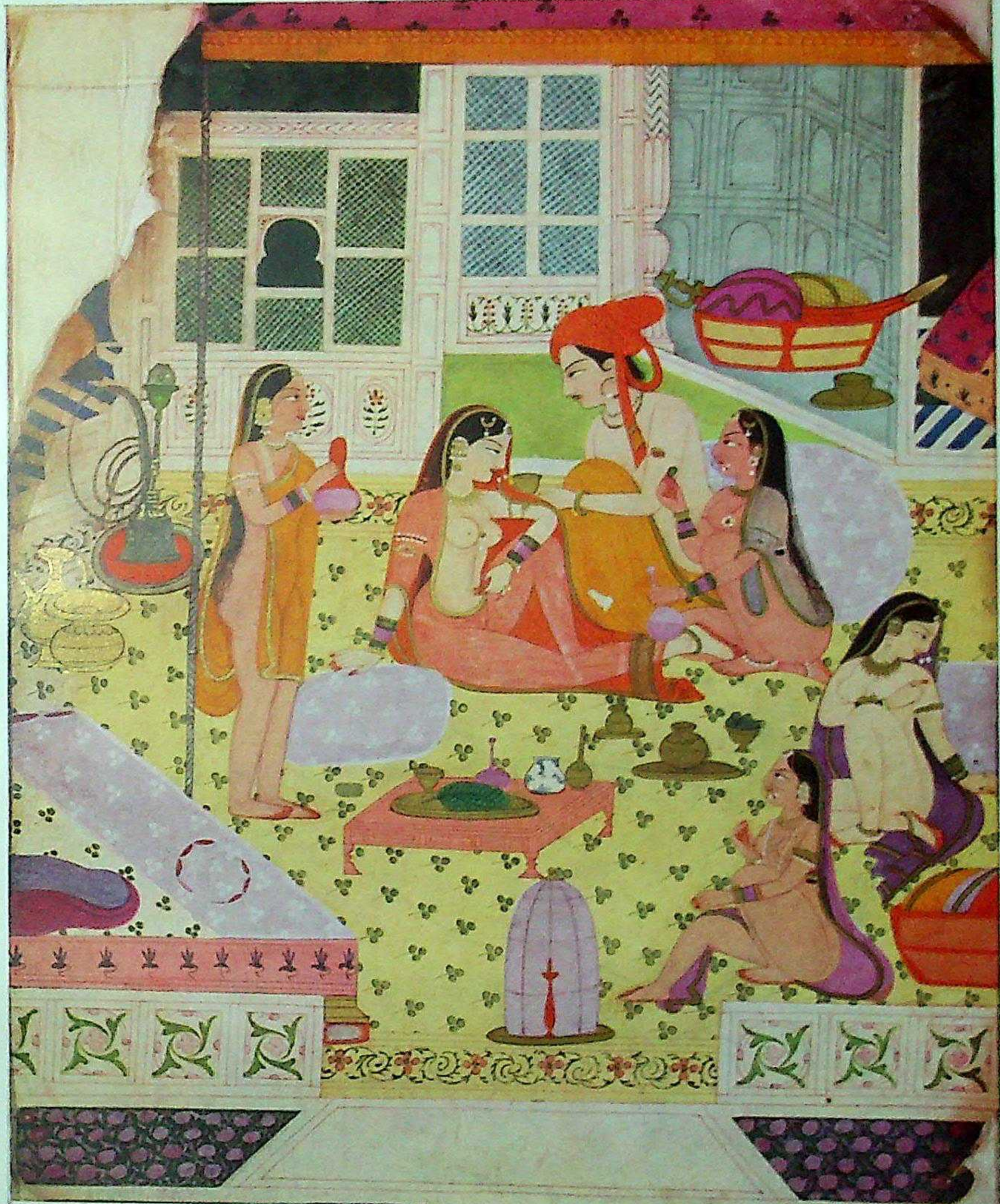


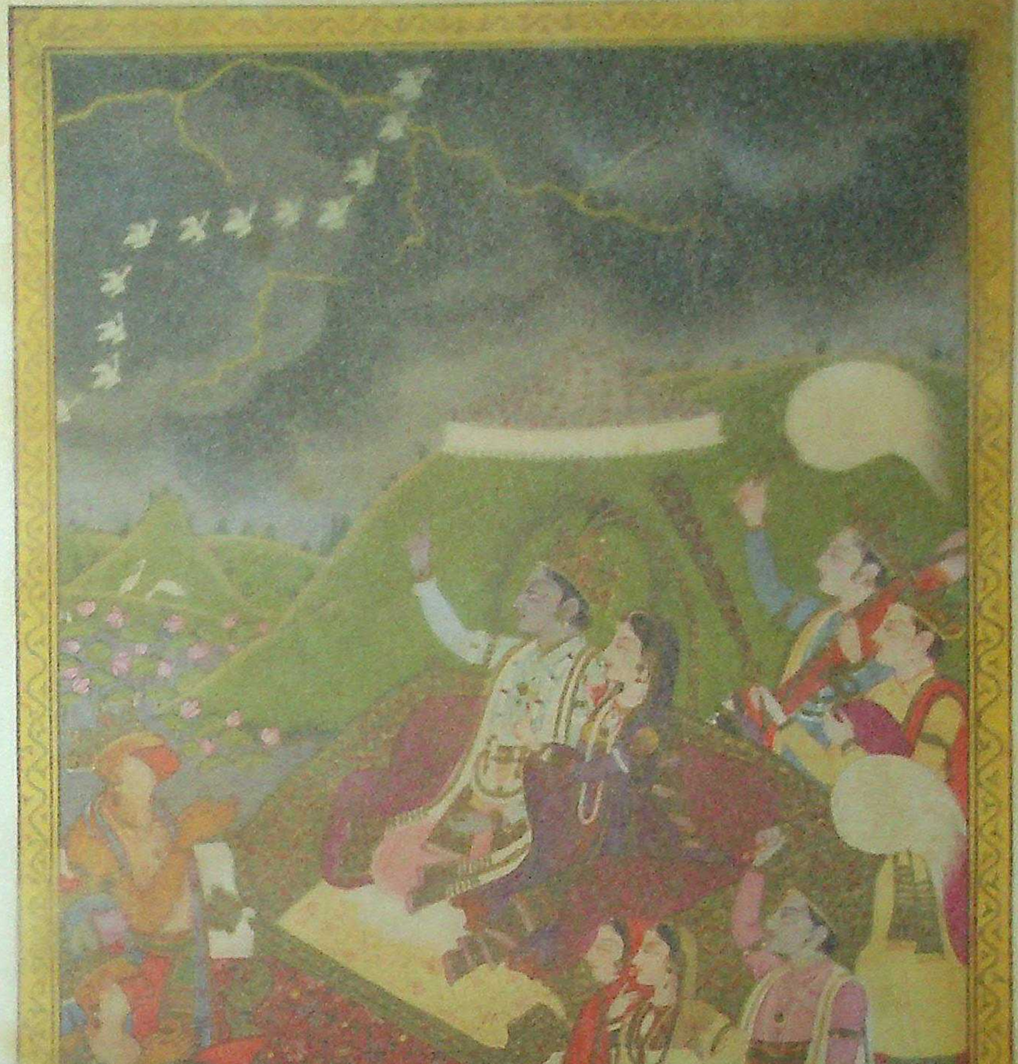
24. Elopement
(*Mian Kartar Singh Collection*)





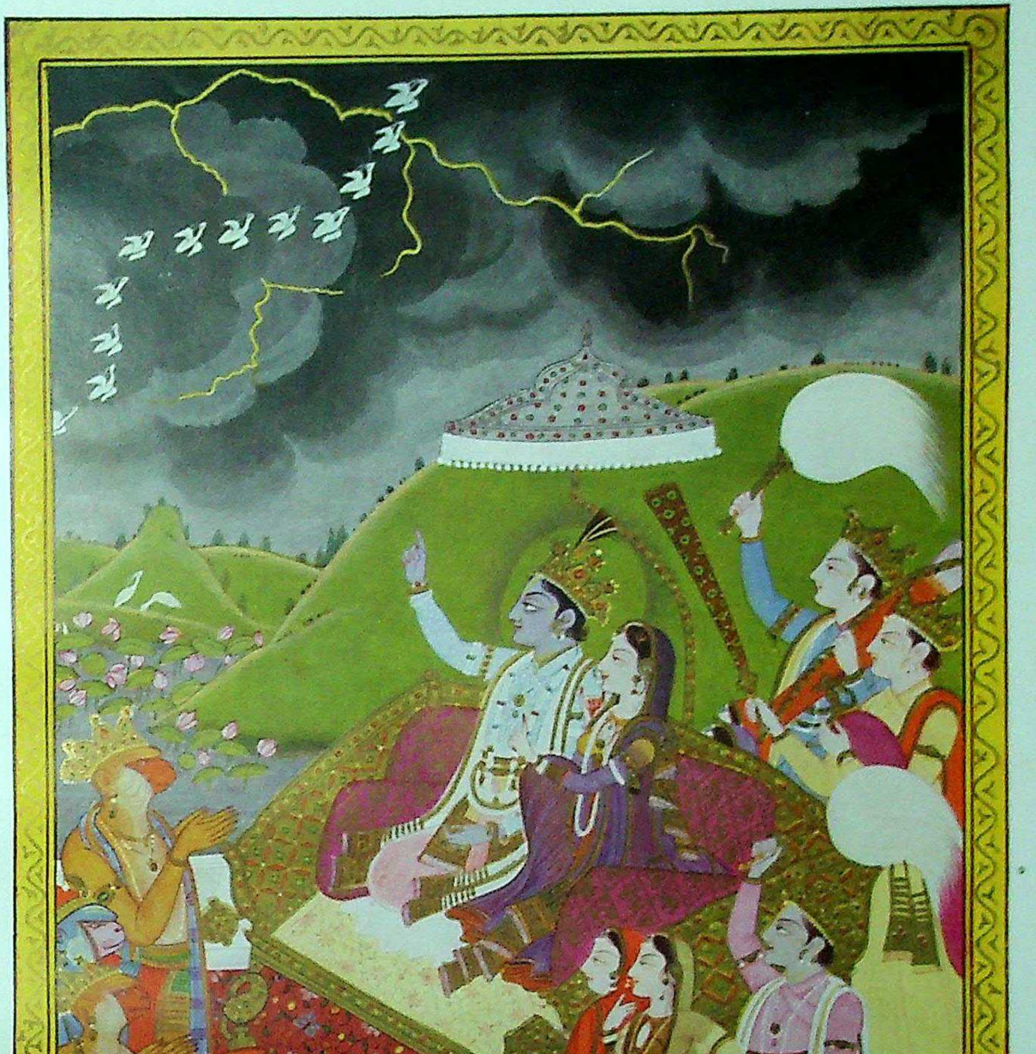
25. Revelry by Night
(*Mian Kartar Singh Collection*)

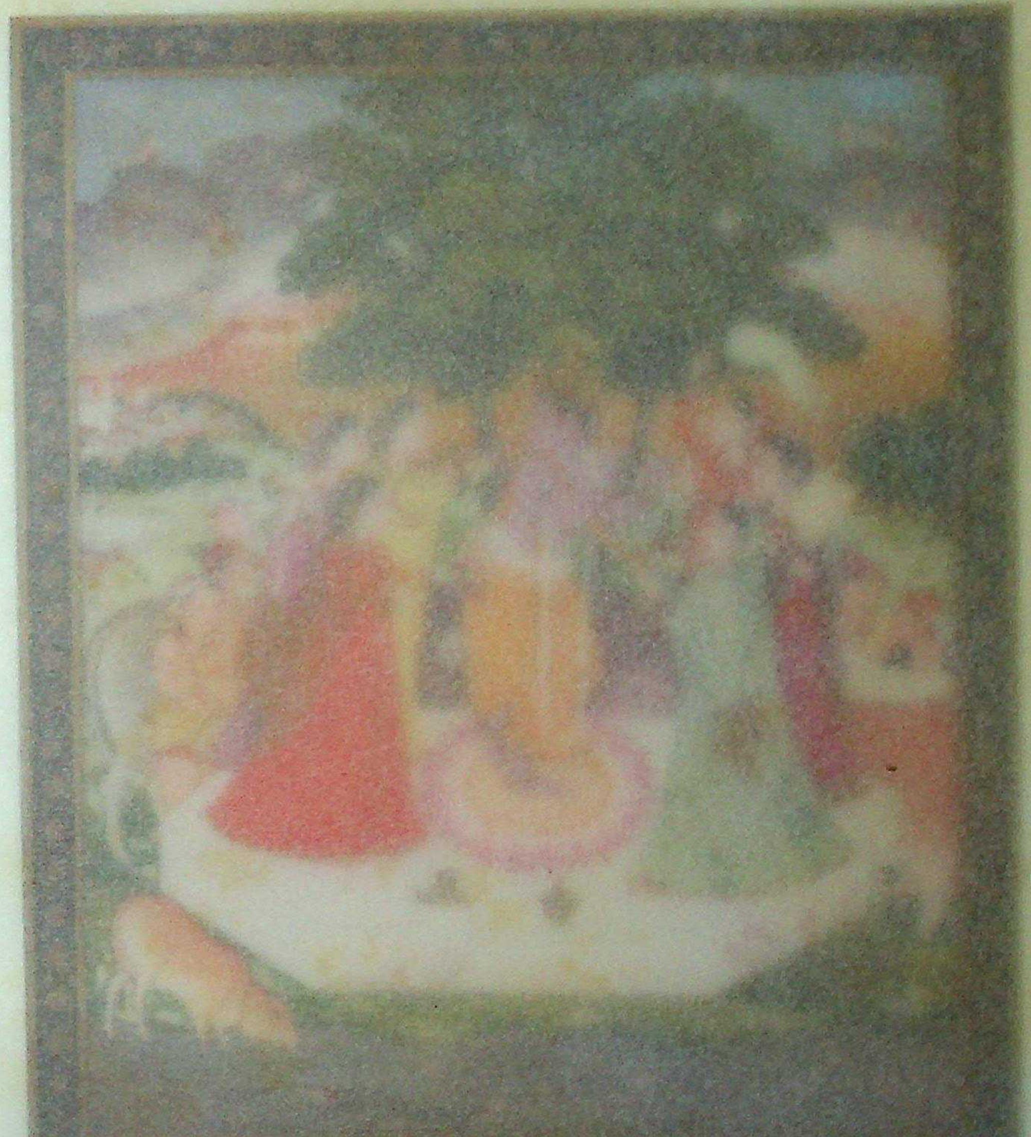




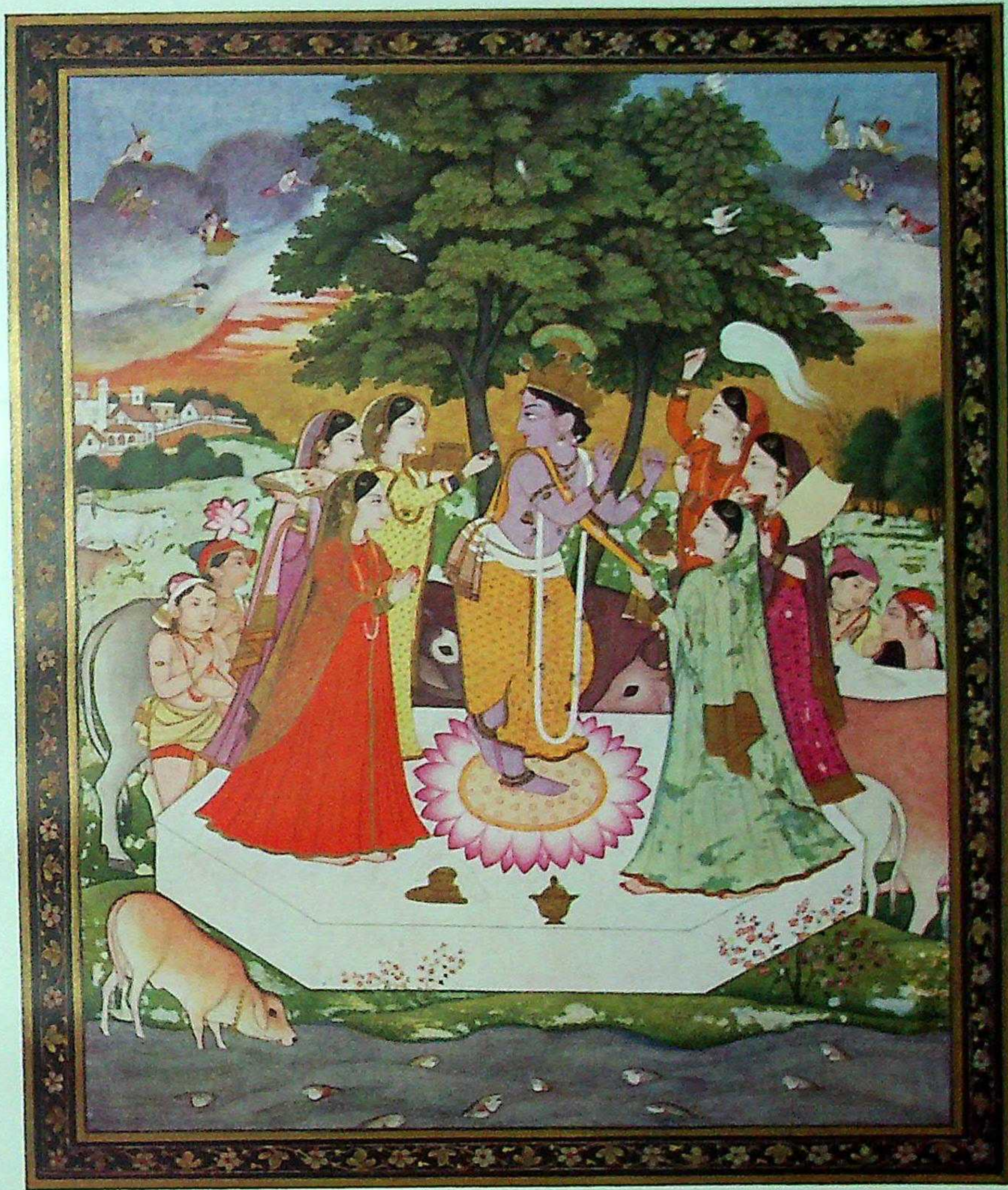
26. Rāma and Sitā Enthroned

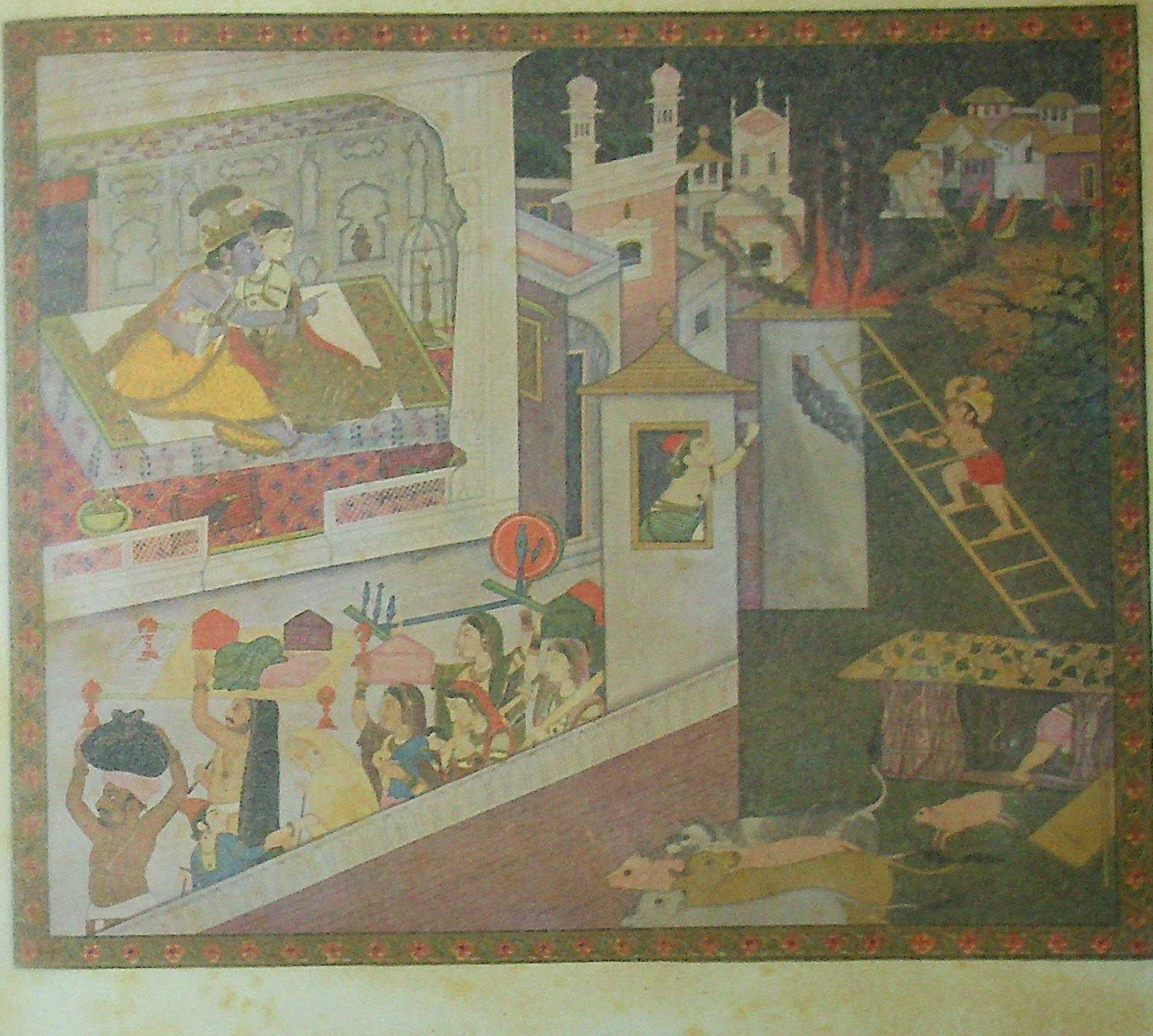
(Raja of Lambagraon Collection)



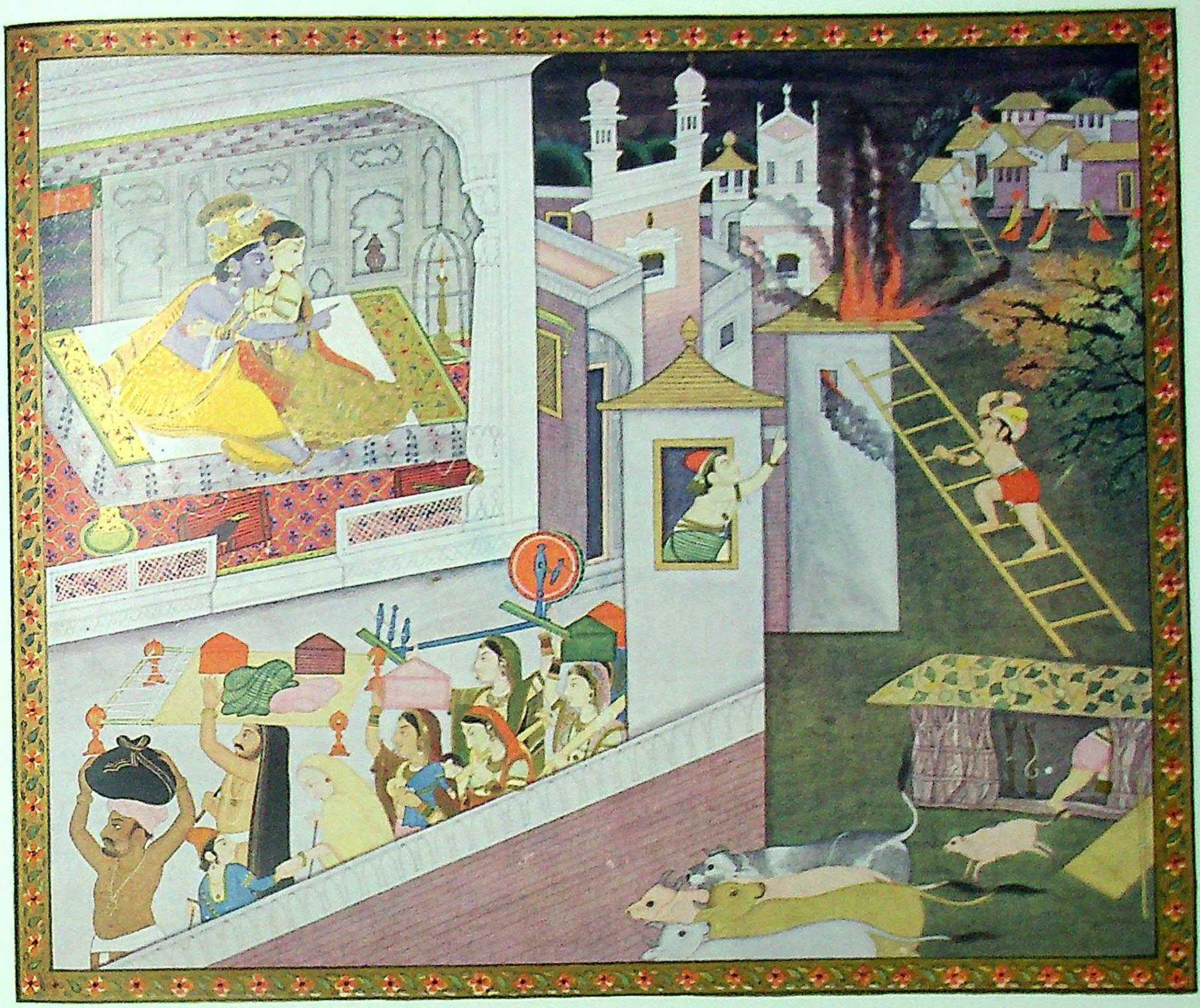


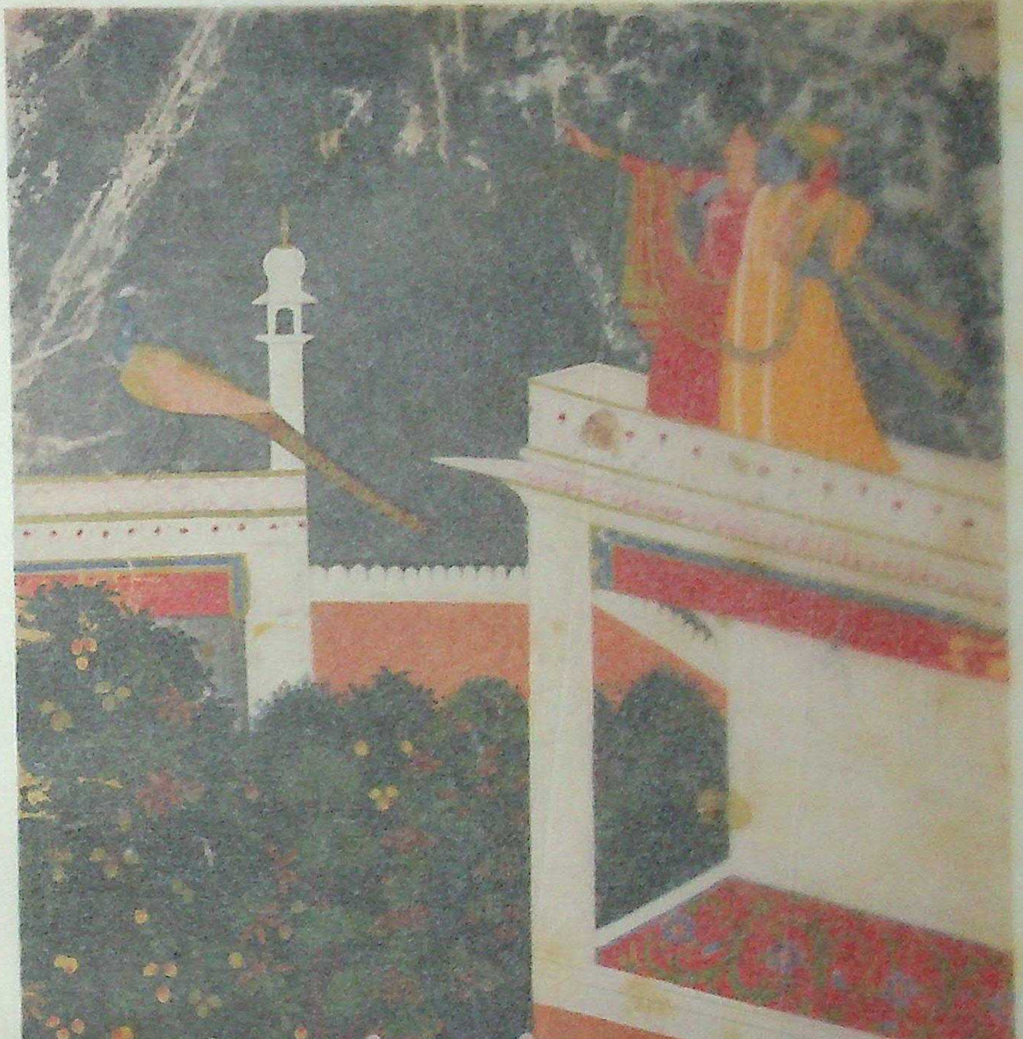
27. The Divine Flutist
(Raja of Lambagraon Collection)



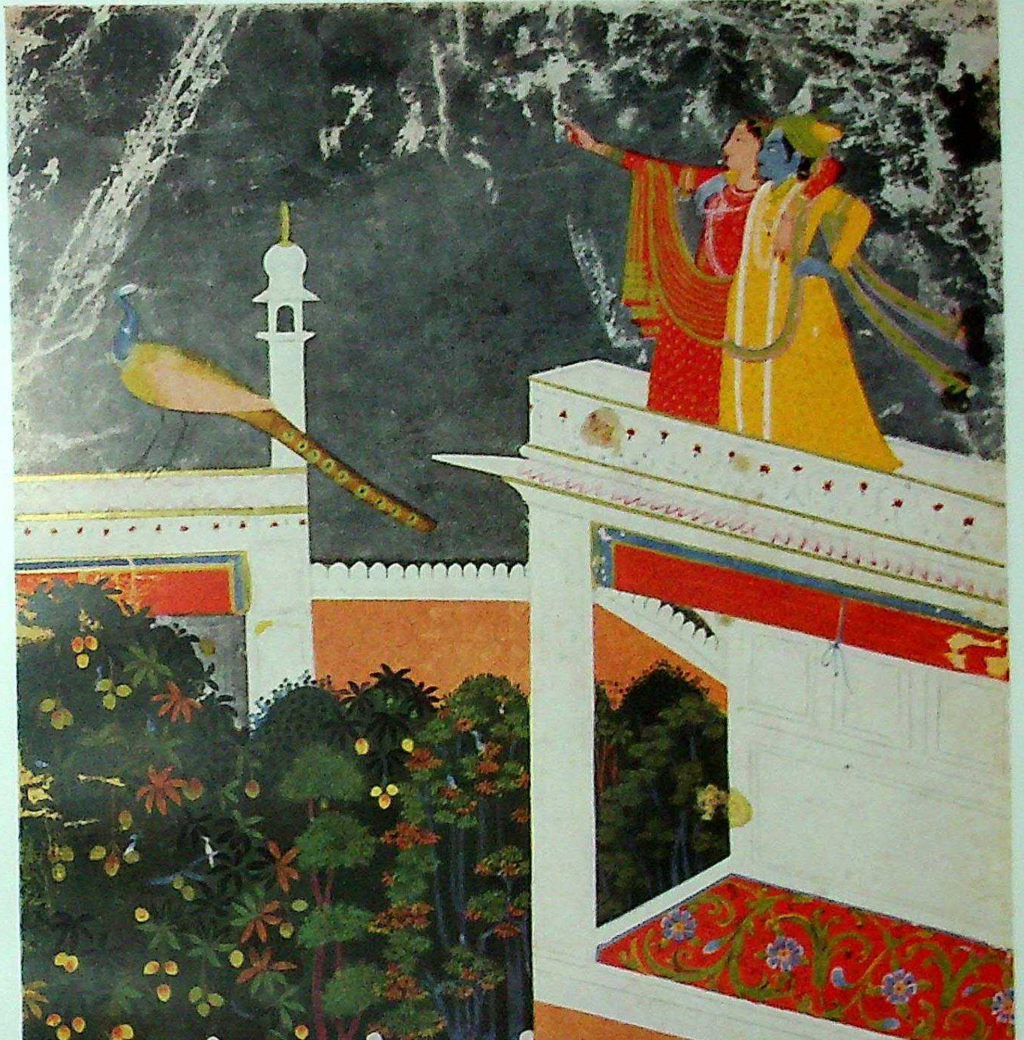


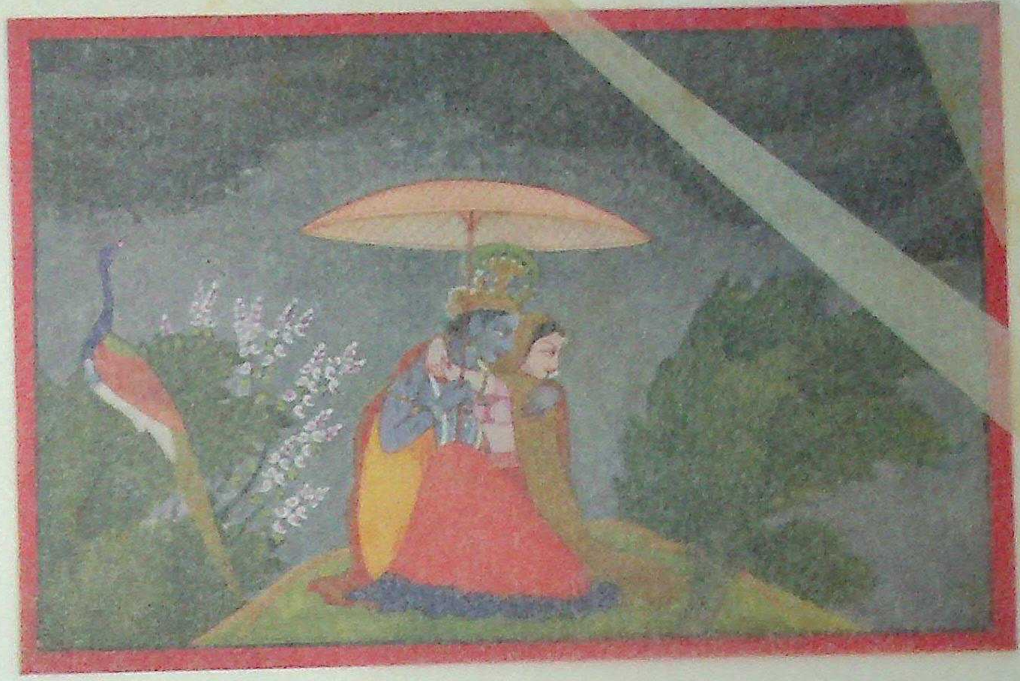
28. Fire in the Village
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)



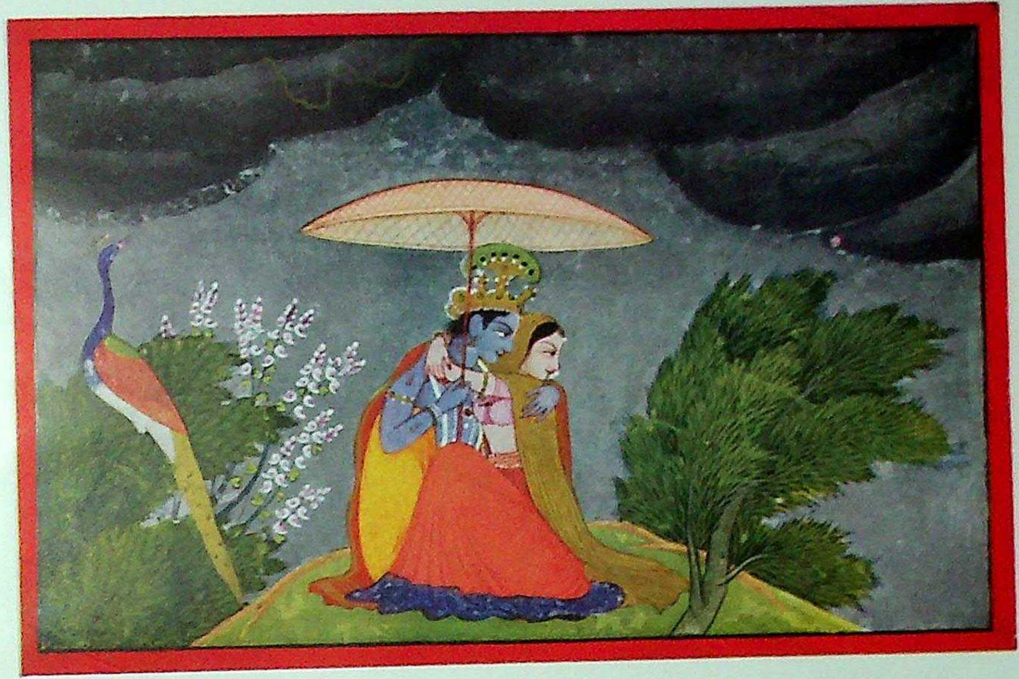


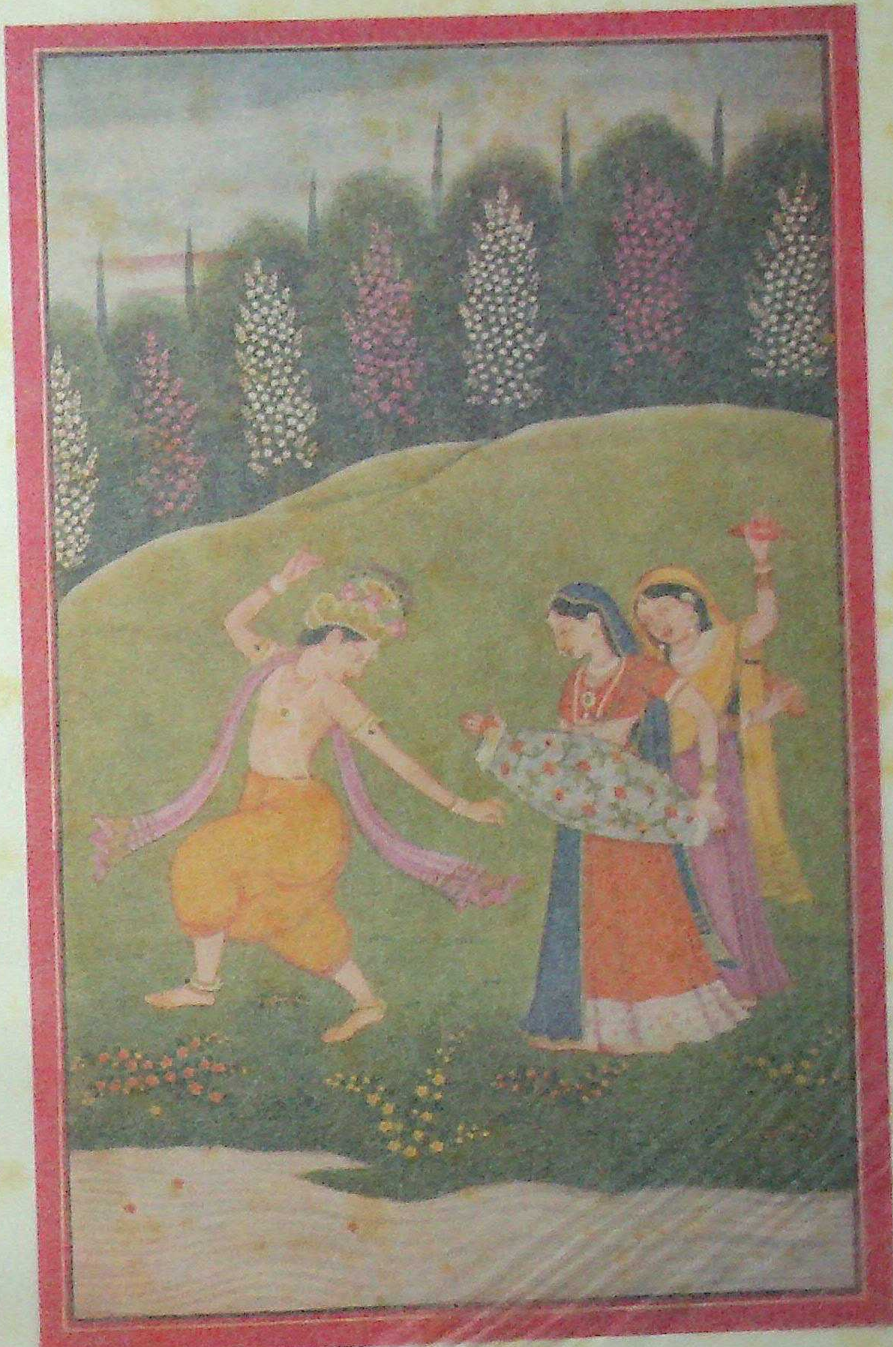
29. Welcoming the Rain Clouds
(Punjab Museum Collection)





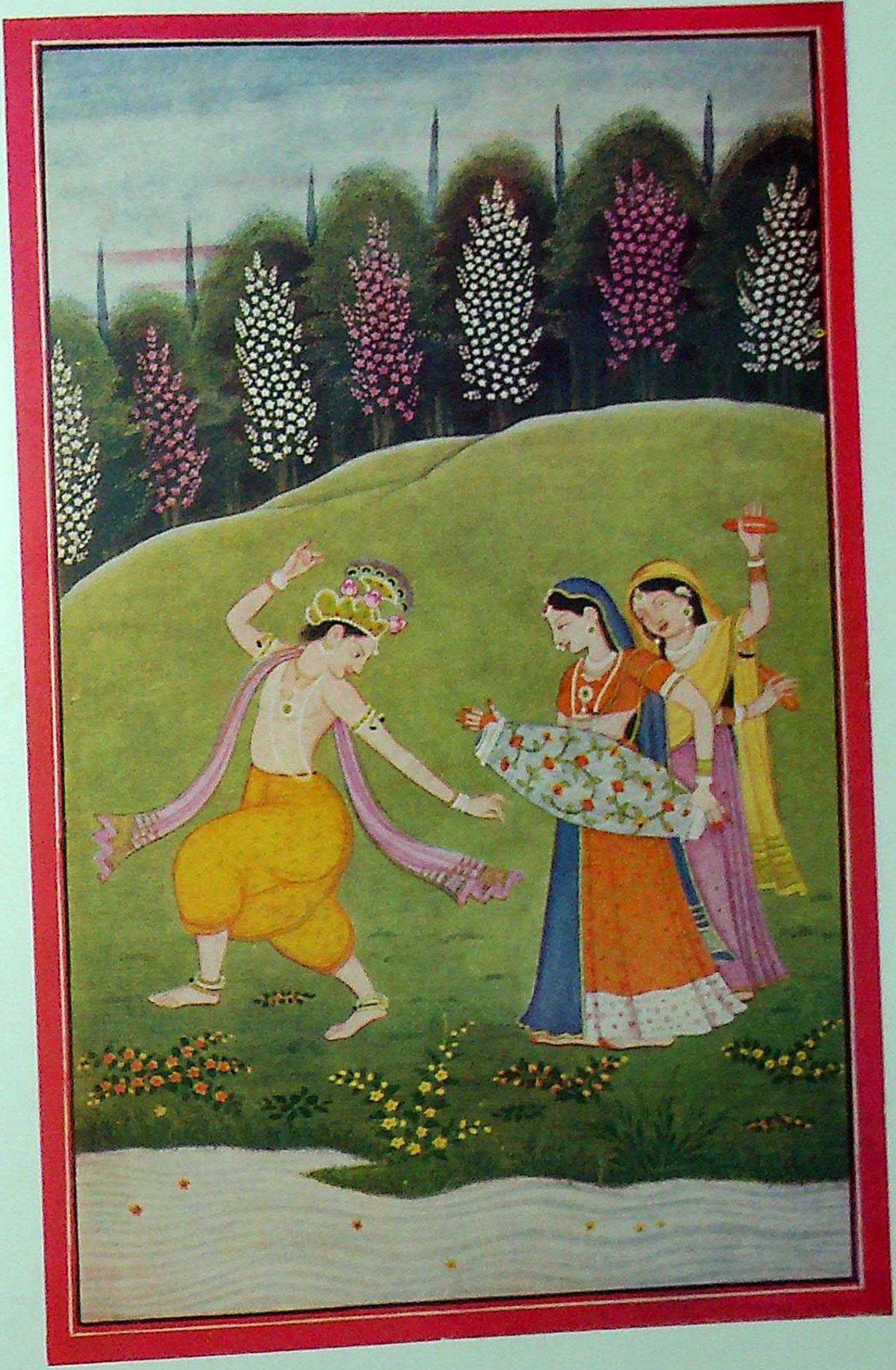
30. Sheltering in the Rain
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)

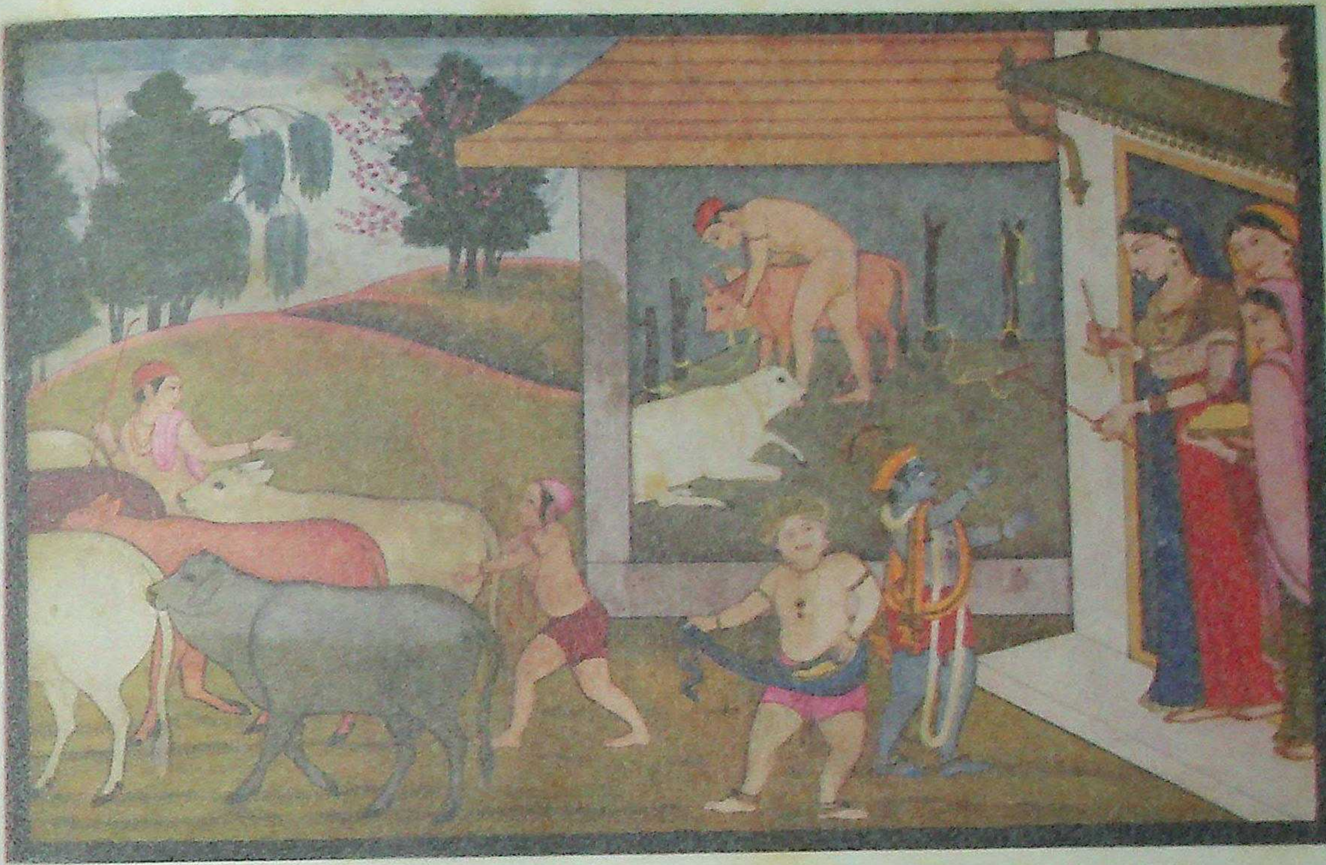




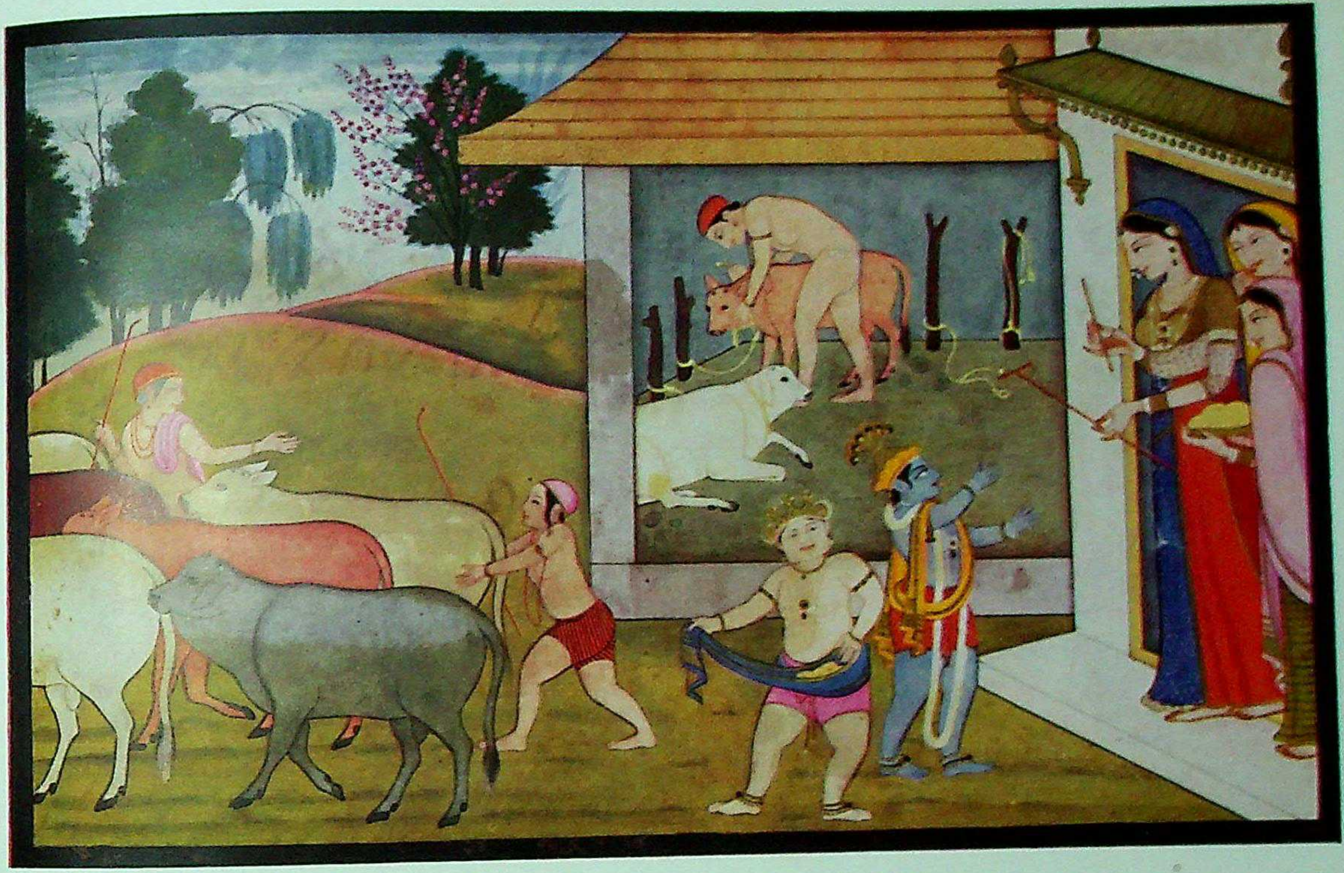
31. Melody of Spring

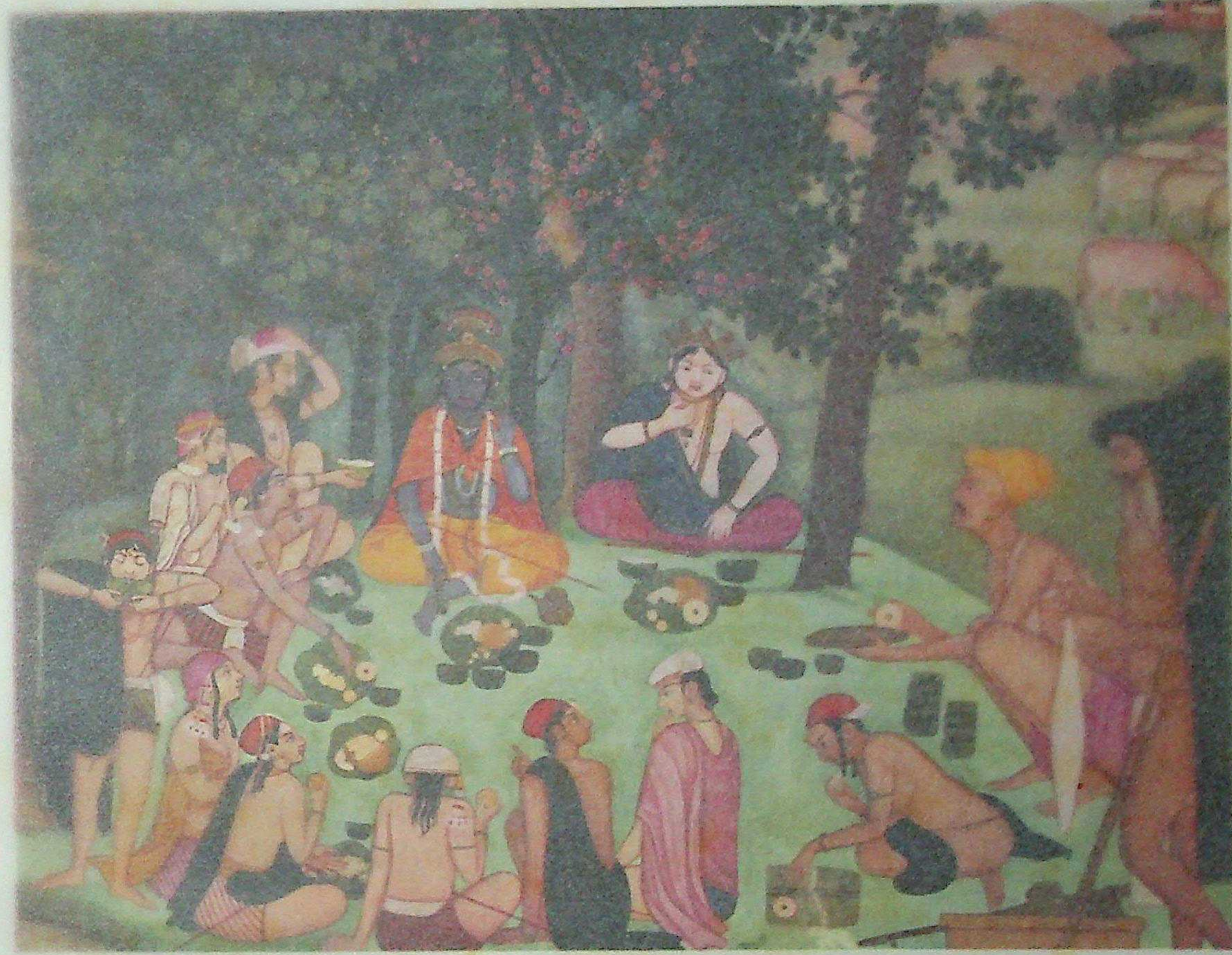
(*National Museum of India Collection*)



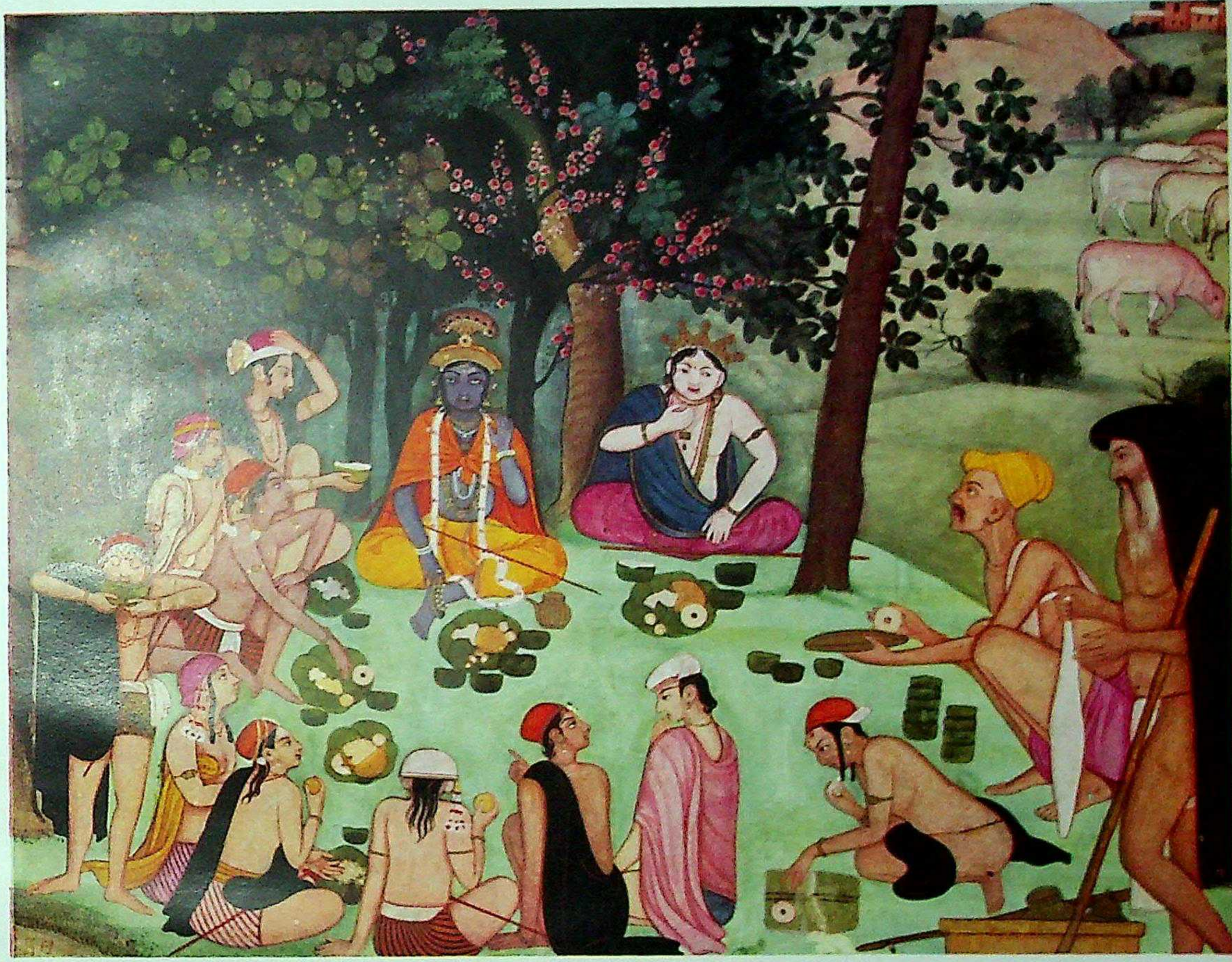


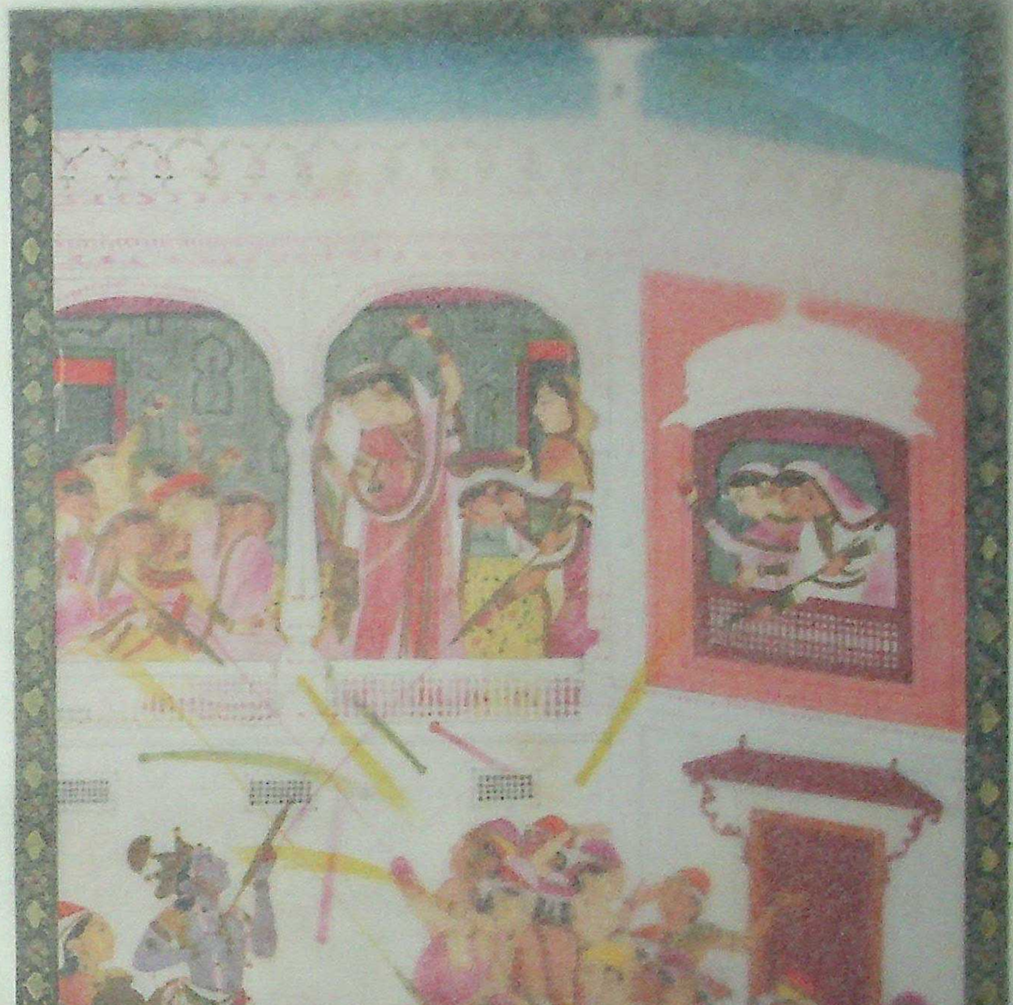
32. Driving the Flock
(Raja of Bilaspur Collection)





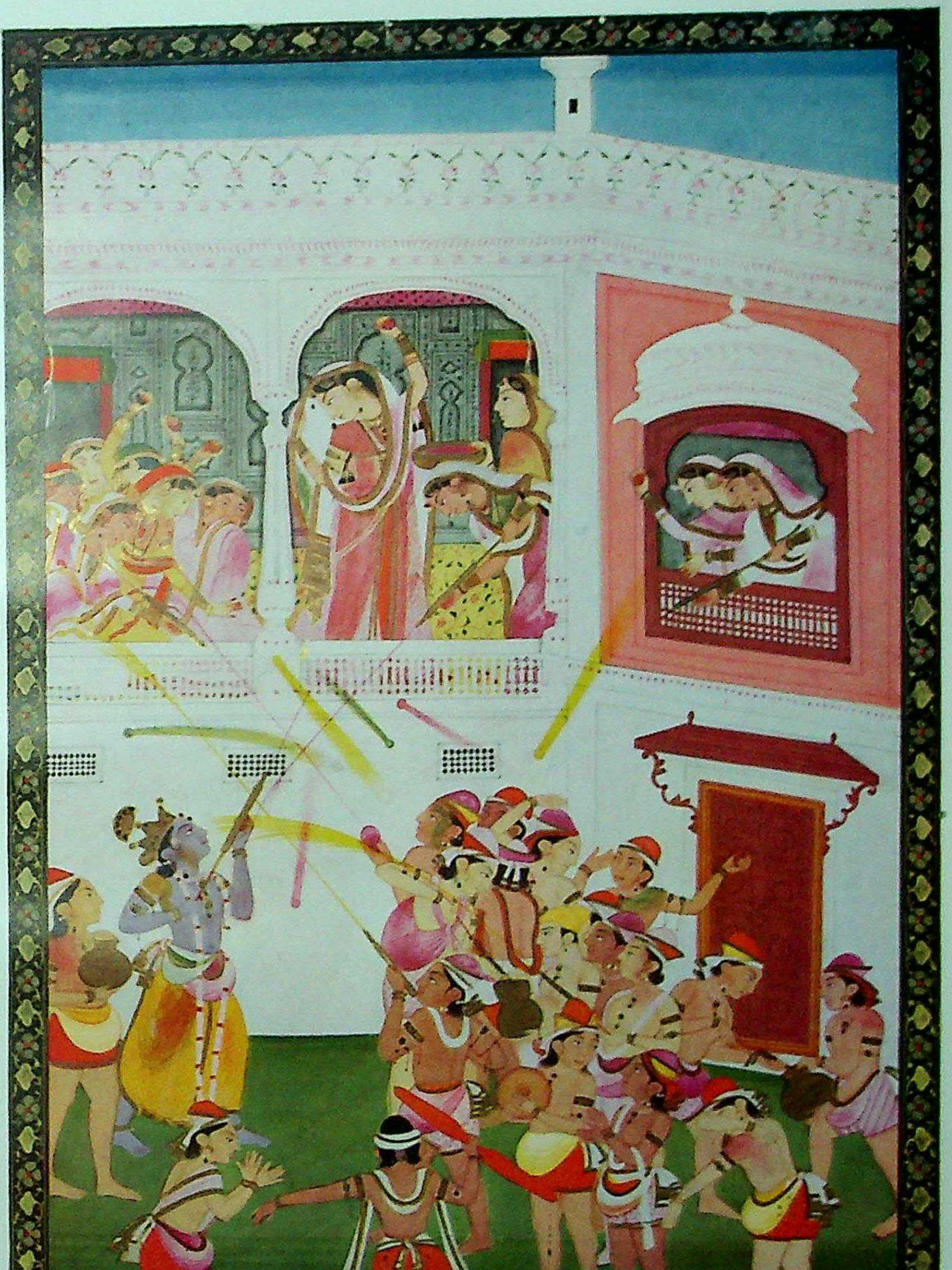
33. Feast in the Forest
(*Punjab Museum Collection*)

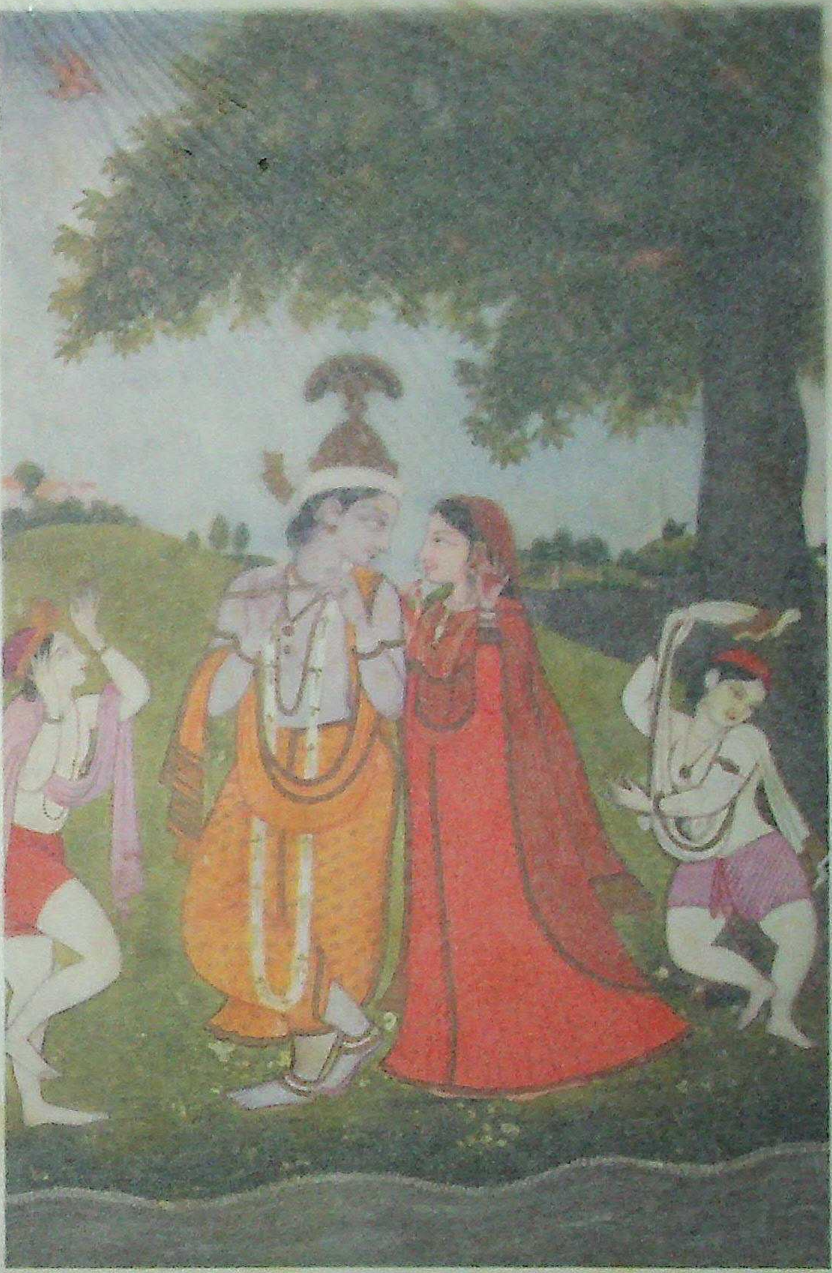




34. Festival of Colour

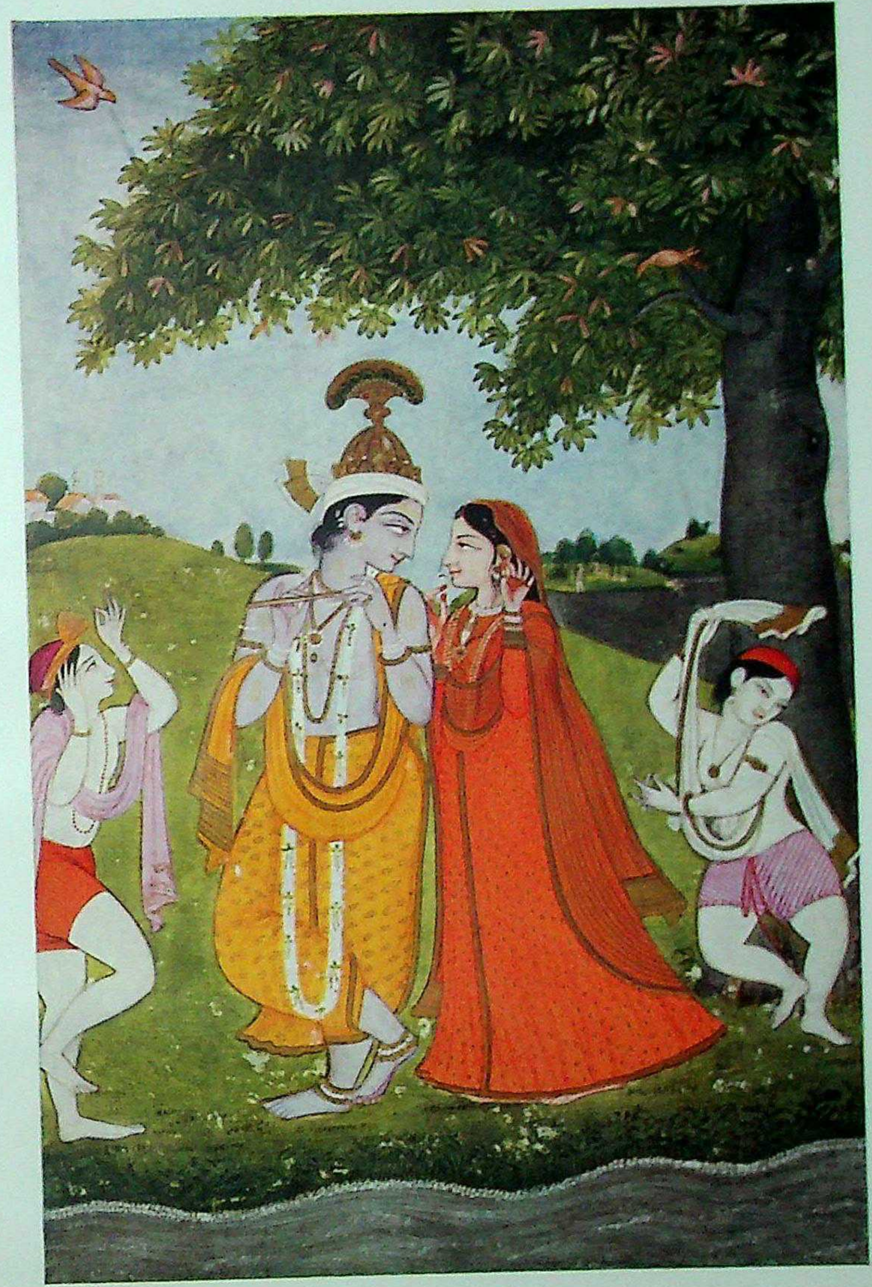
(*Raja of Bilaspur Collection*)

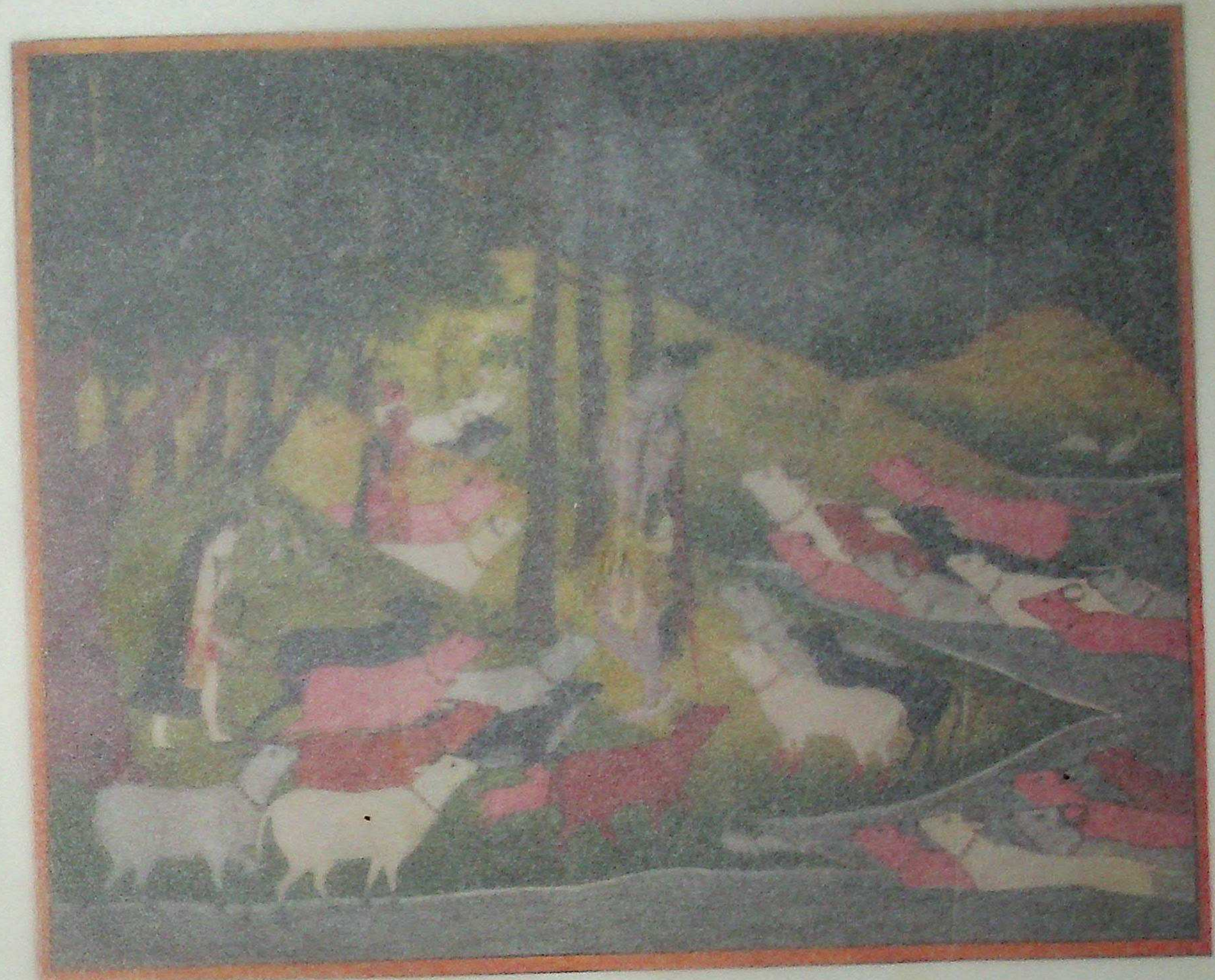




35. The Divine Pair

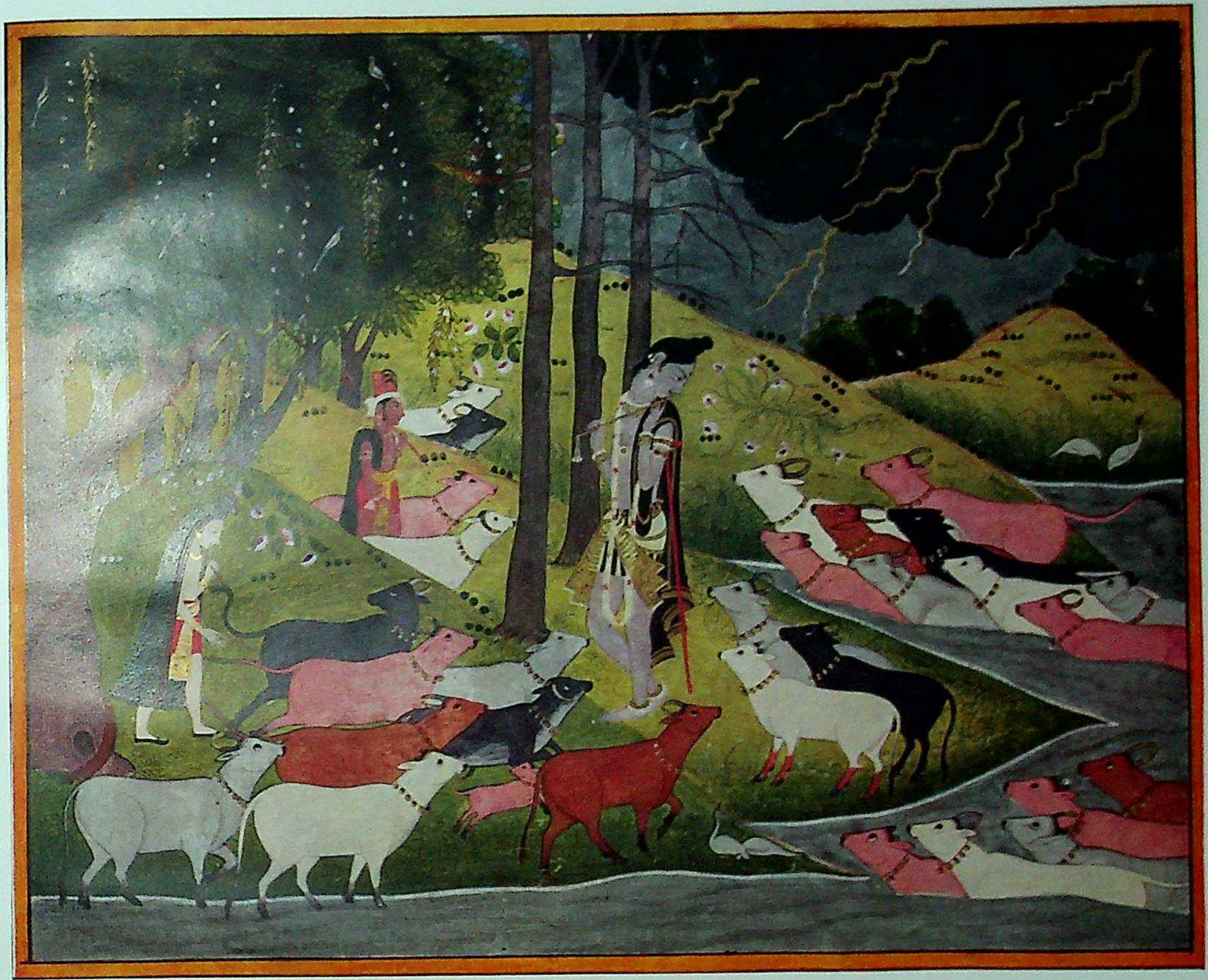
(*Captain Sunder Singh Collection*).

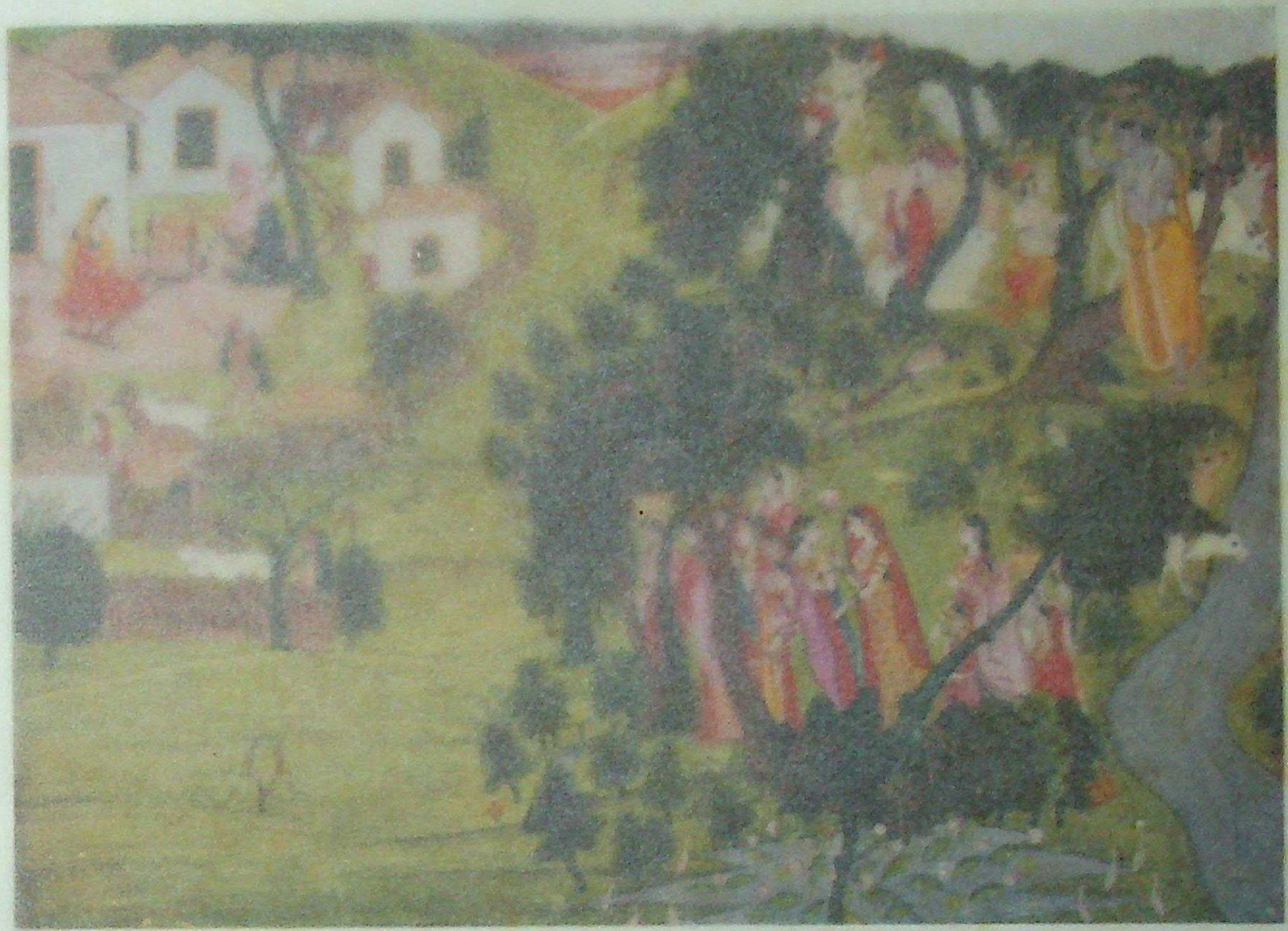




36. Krishna's Magic Flute

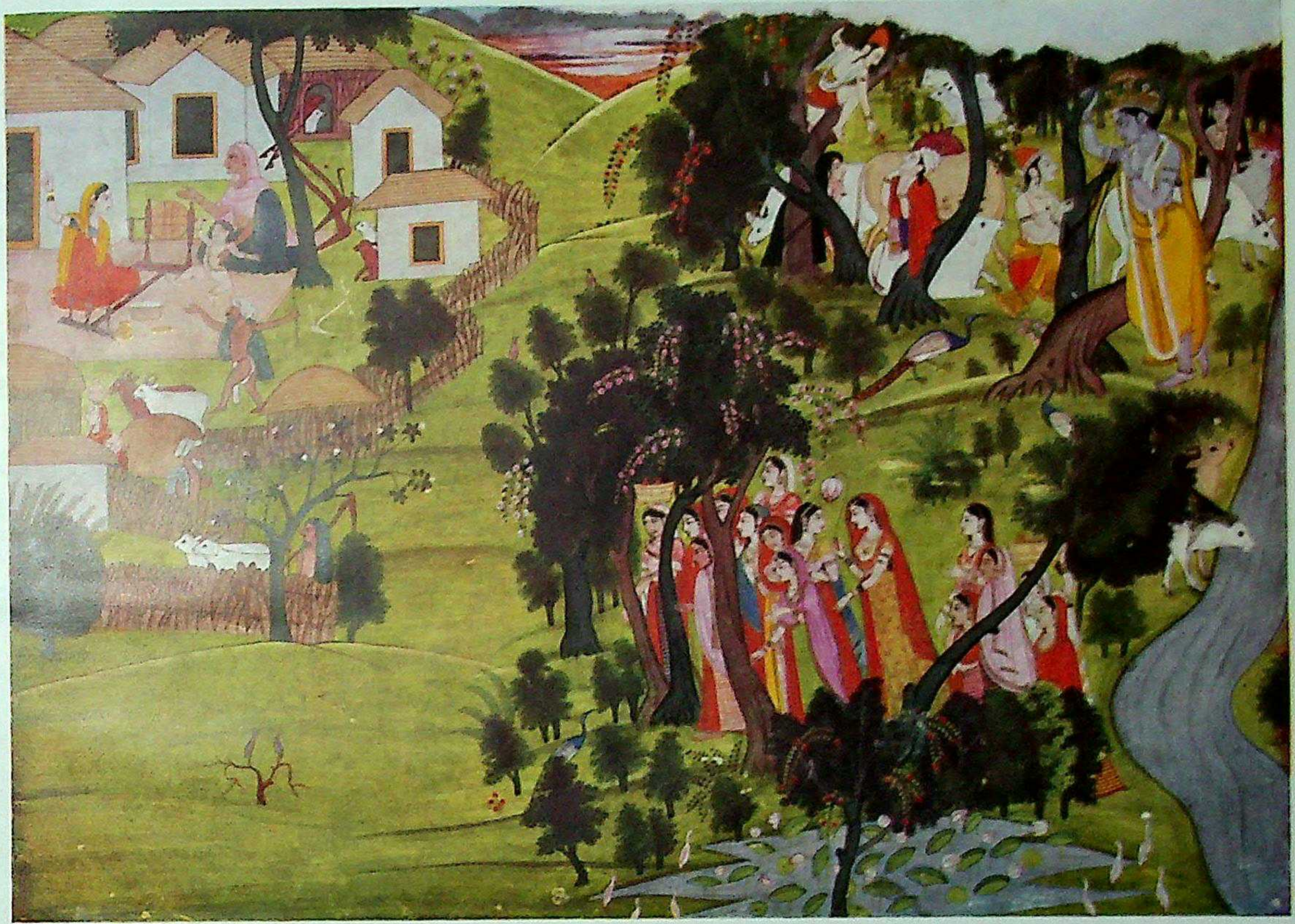
(Raja of Bilaspur Collection)

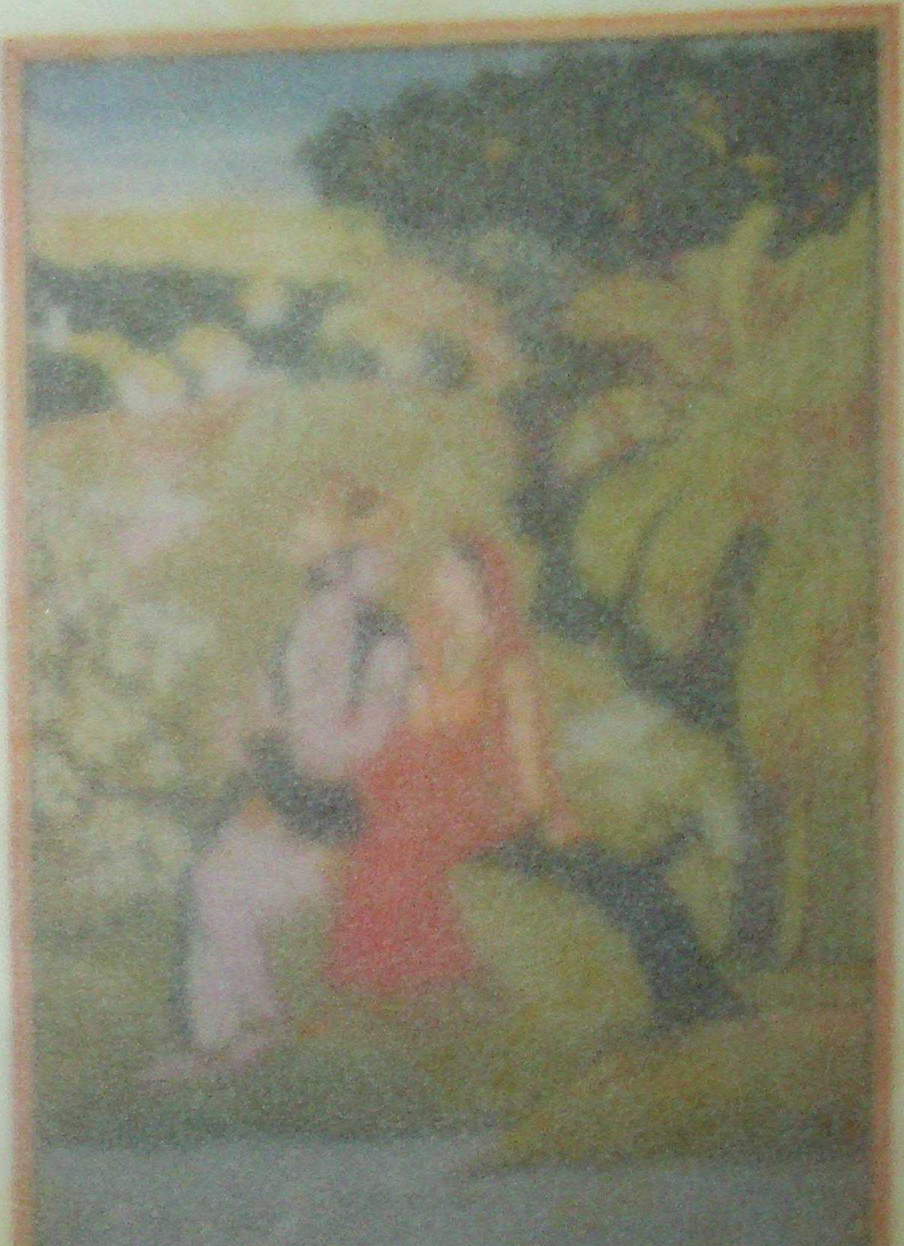




37. In Search of Krishna

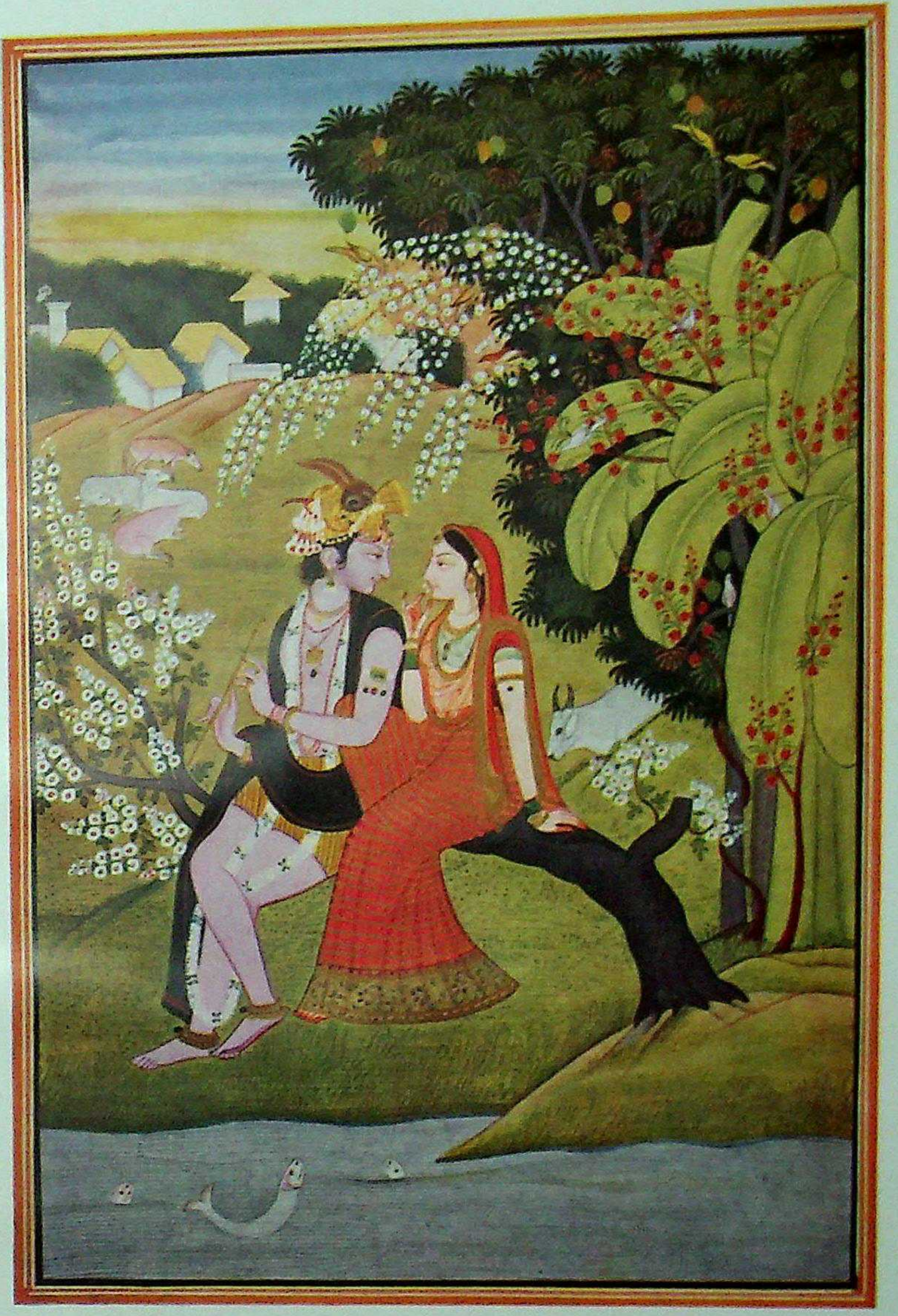
(*Raja of Bilaspur Collection*)

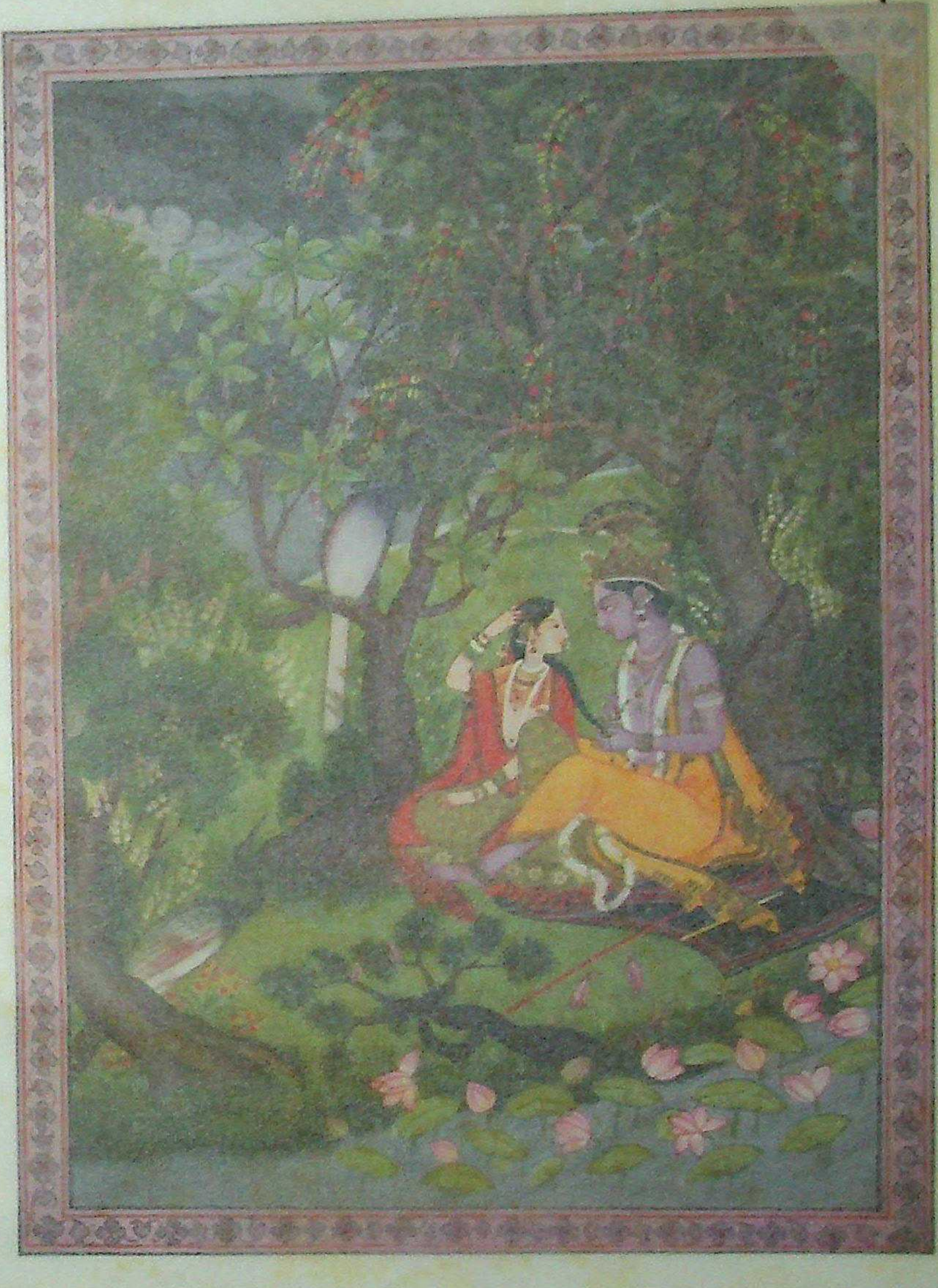




38. Enraptured Lovers

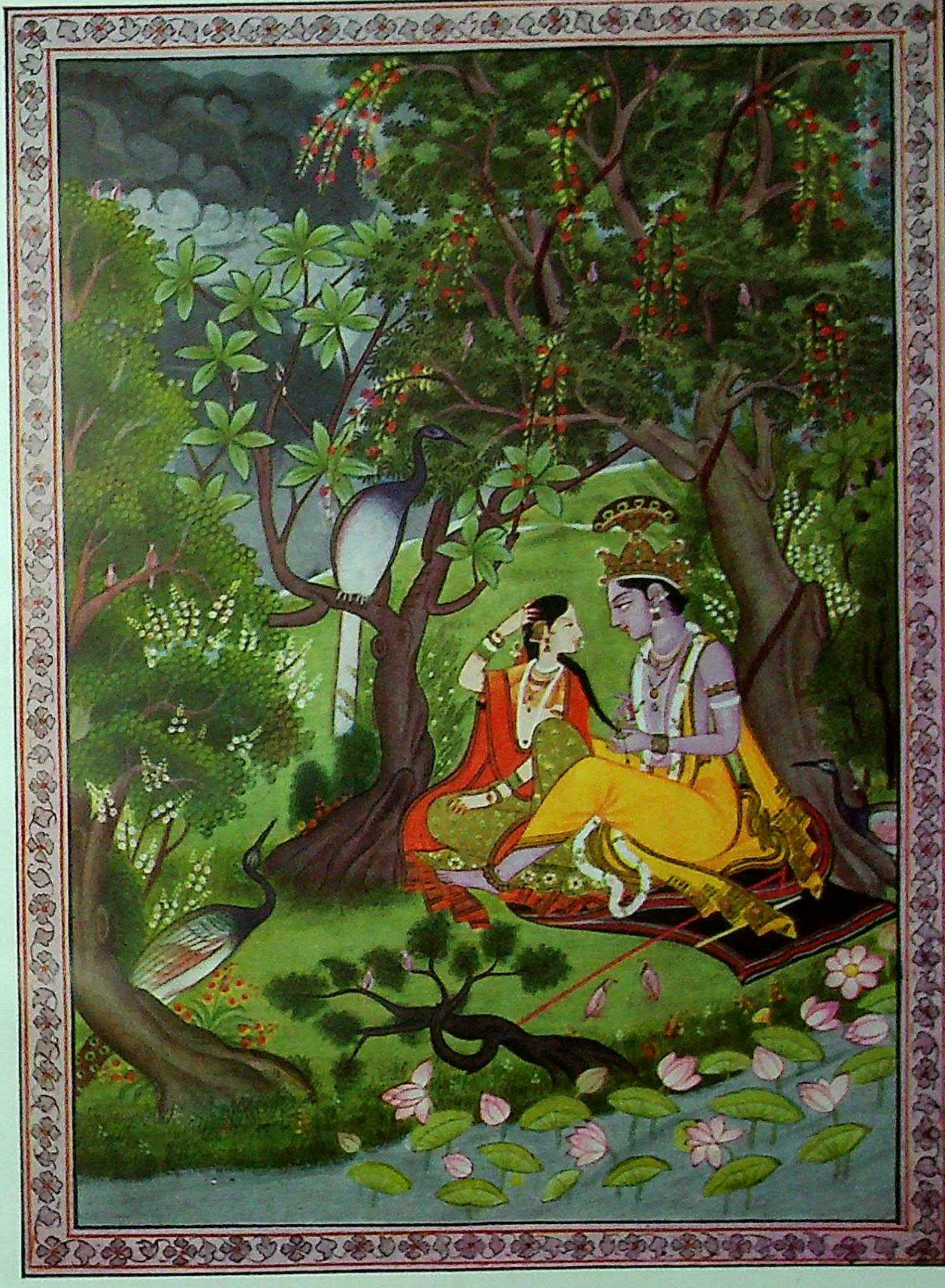
(*Raja of Lambagraon Collection*)

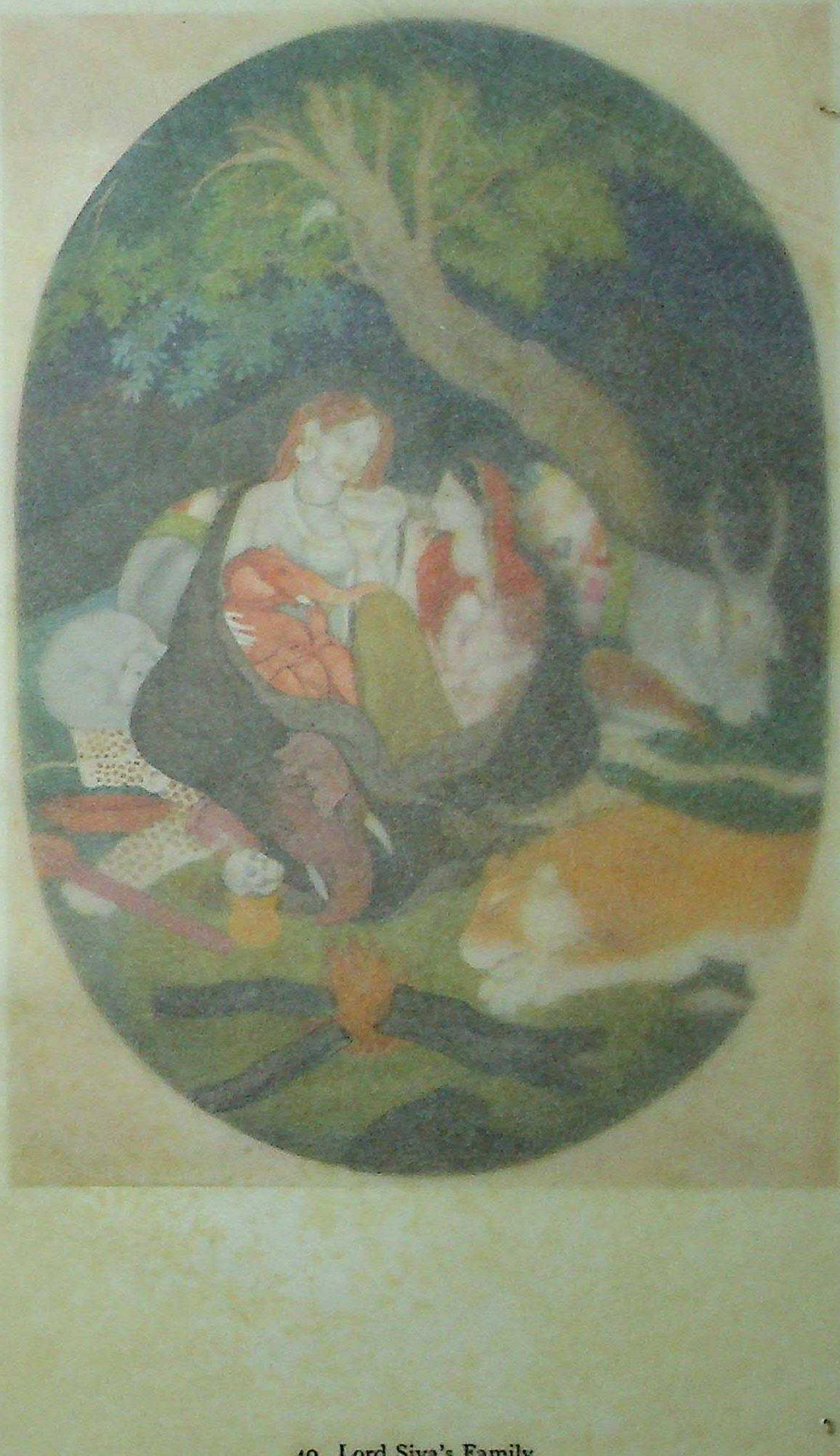




39. Krishna braiding Rādhā's Hair

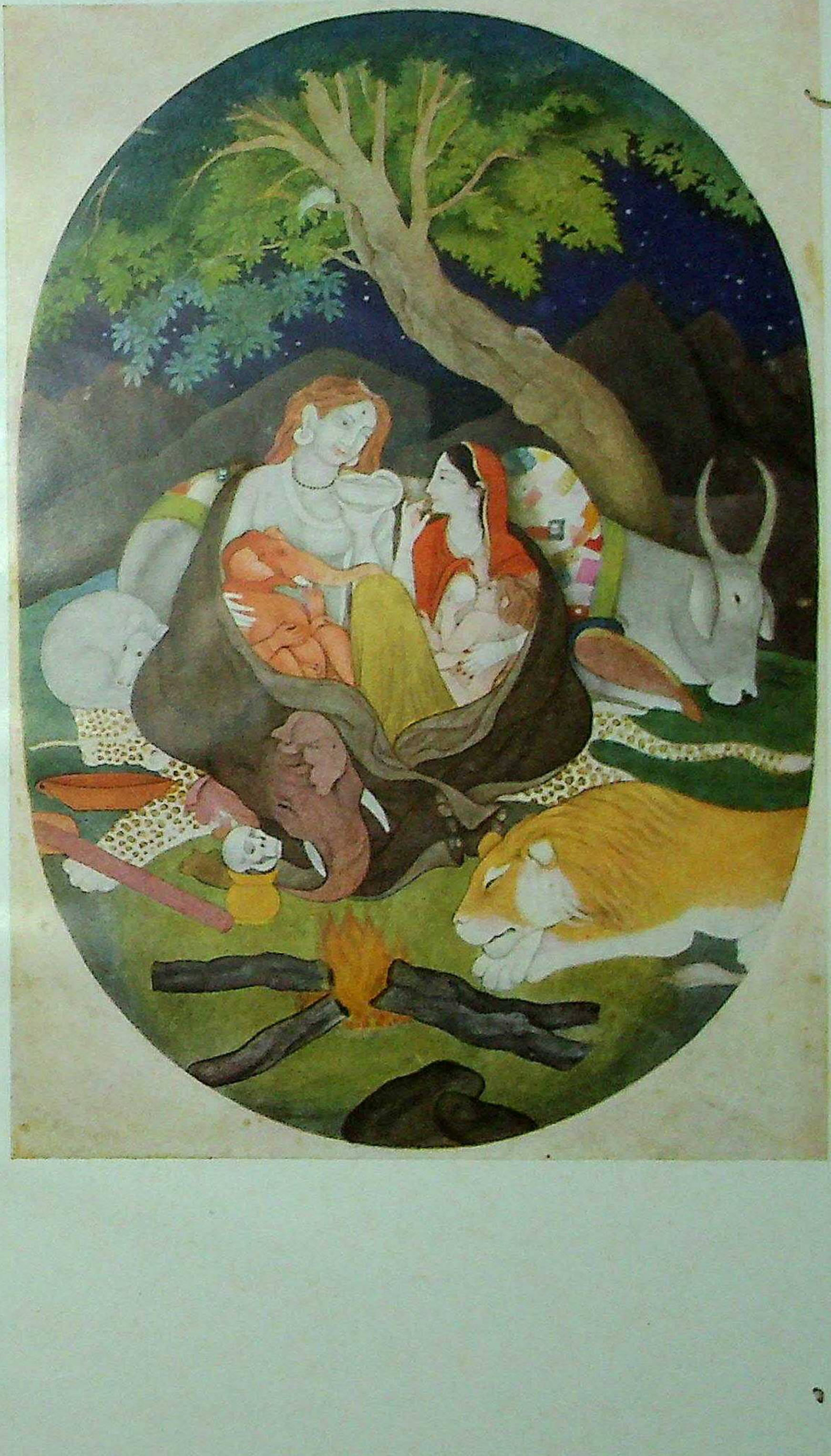
(*Raja of Lambagraon Collection*).





40. Lord Siva's Family

(Punjab Museum Collection)



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